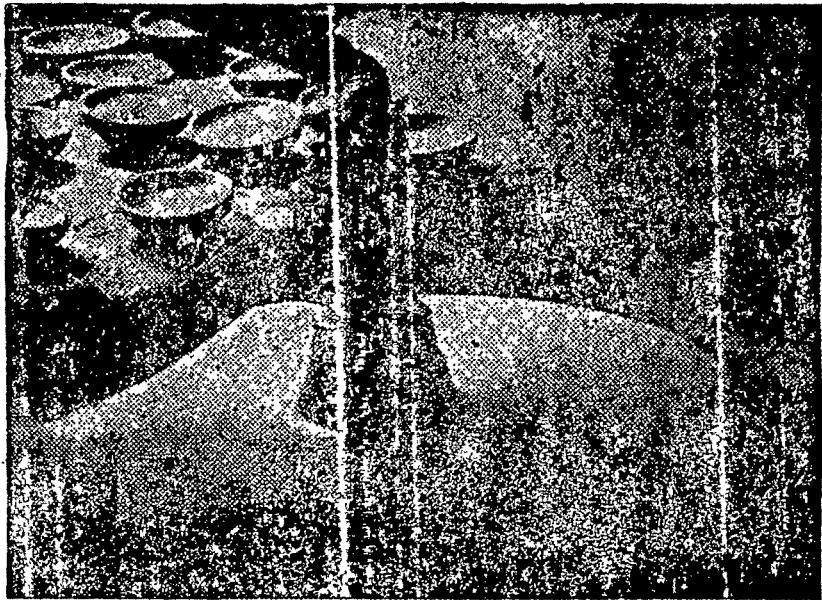


the art of good management...



**moulding our varied resources — human,
natural, technological — for the
common good.**

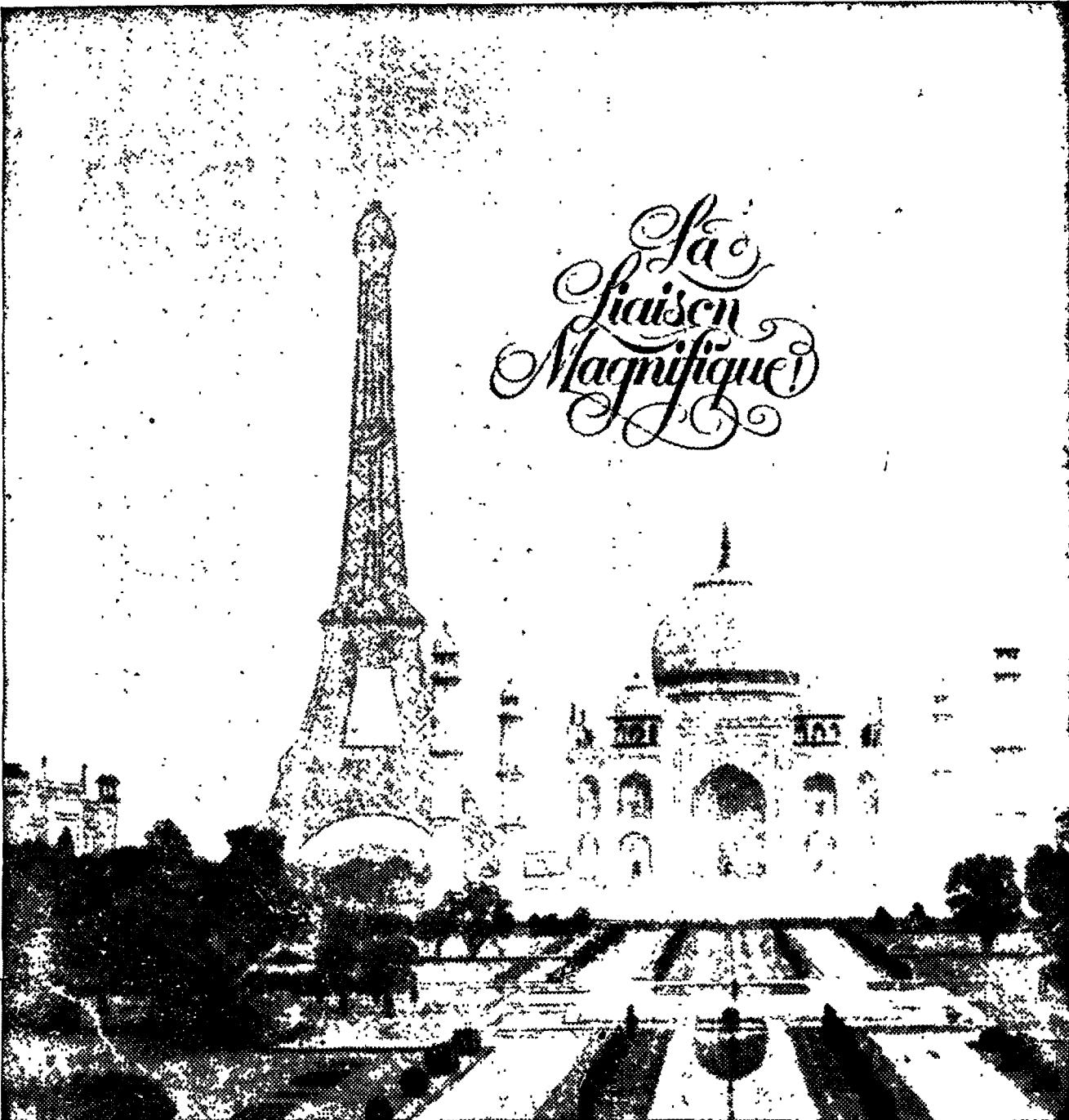
Shriram seminars and courses are part of this moulding process... which involves executives in a ceaseless interchange of ideas, discussion of modern techniques, evaluation and reconsideration of policies. So that the Shriram organisation is constantly infused with fresh dynamism... and our resources are utilised to the optimum.



SHRI RAM FERTILISERS AND CHEMICALS

KP 3847

SEMINAR, JANUA



Two leading automotive manufacturers in the world have come together. Peugeot of France and Mahindra of India. A magnificent association. The famed XDP 4.90 diesel engine is now being manufactured by Mahindra.

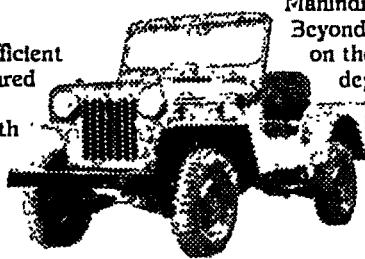
This is the first time that this fuel-efficient and noise-free engine will be manufactured outside of France. To power Mahindra vehicles that span the length and breadth of India.



PEUGEOT

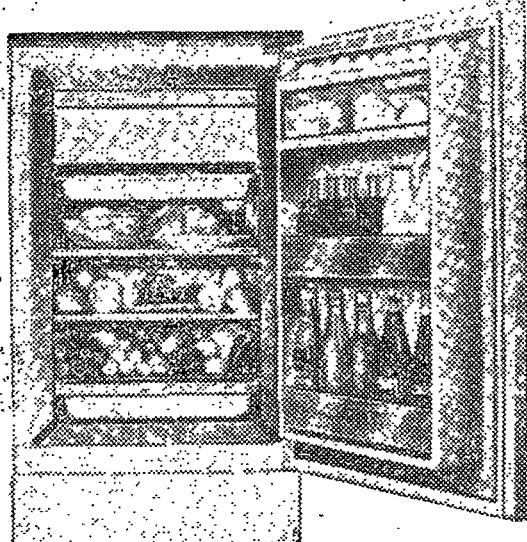
Running reminders of ruggedness and reliability. Nor do they stop there.

In 21 countries round the globe, Mahindra vehicles are proving their worth. Beyond a doubt. Proudly putting India on the world map of efficient, dependable transport.



**Mahindra and Mahindra
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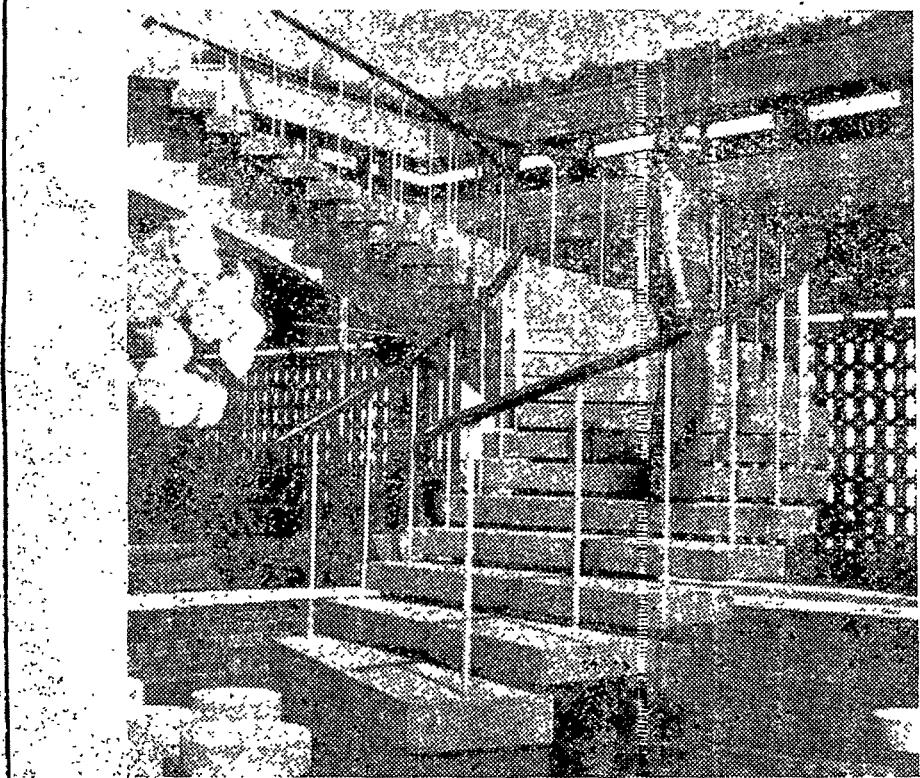
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GK&E D82.622

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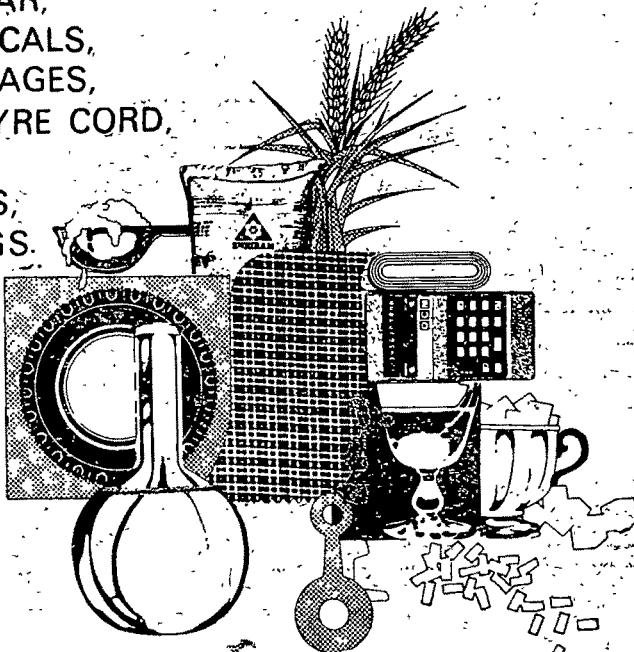


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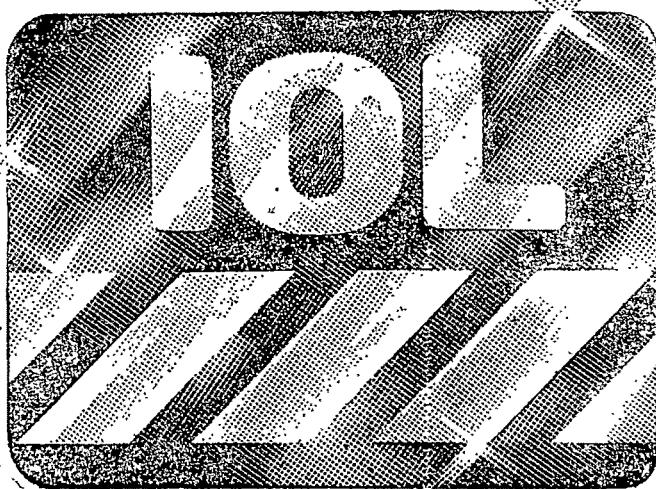
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THE NATION**

KP 3847



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IOL is also deeply involved in the medical sphere by meeting the needs for vital medical gases, anaesthetic equipment & surgical accessories.

Today, IOL technology has permeated into a wide spectrum of industries and ushered

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Equipped with a technology that's constantly developing and a cadre of indigenously developed talent, IOL pledges to make greater contributions to India's industrial progress.

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Promoting self-reliance.

IOX/CAS-9/79

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Rourkela is a steel plant with a difference. Its product range is the widest. Plates, hot rolled coils, cold rolled sheets and coils, galvanised sheets, electrolytic tin plates, electrical sheets and large diameter pipes. Add to this the fertilizers SONA and RAJA. Granulated slag for the cement industry. The products of Rourkela serve the core sectors. Helping manufacture of domestic conveniences.

And the search for new products and newer specifications is always on. CRGO and CRNO silicon steel sheets for the power sector will be new additions to the already wide range. Rourkela has developed clad plates (ROUCLAD), perfected high strength low alloy plates (SAIIMA), and produced ROUDRAW.

ROURKELA STEEL PLANT

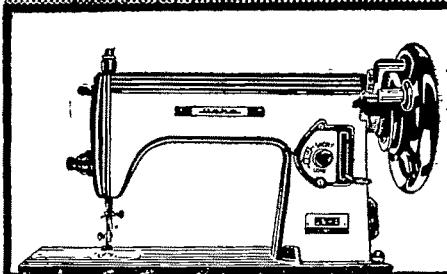
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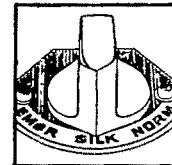


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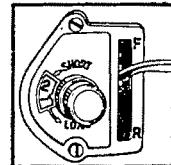
Versatile features



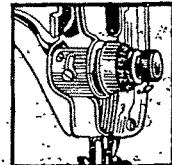
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everest/82/JY/226

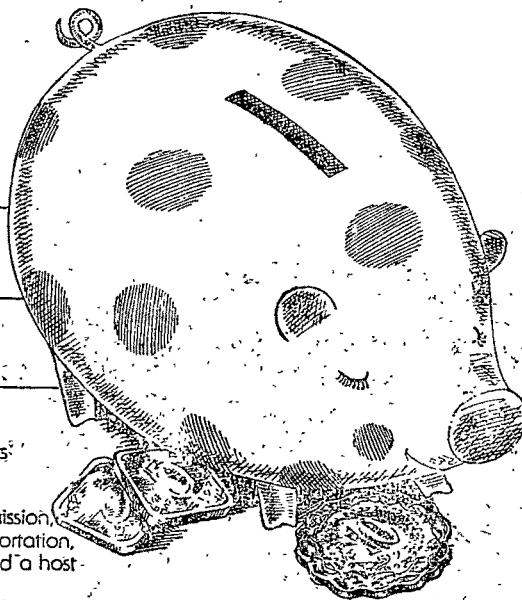
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Indal pioneering. It's bringing change. Both big and small.



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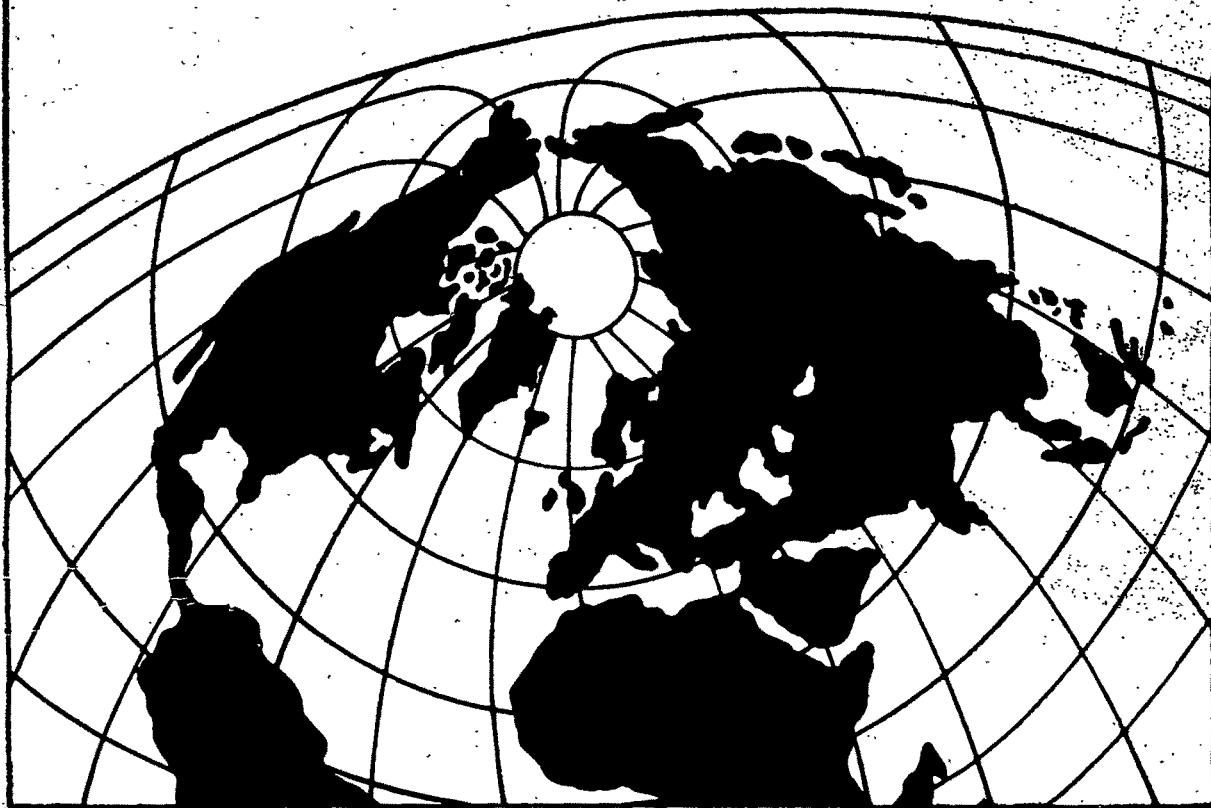
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STC has taken
the Indian
manufacturer**



THE STATE TRADING CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.

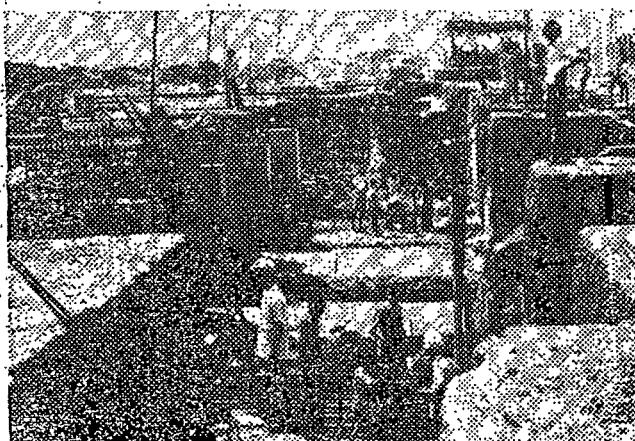


SELF-RELIANCE

in

Steel Plant Engineering and Technology

DASTURCO pioneered steel plant engineering consultancy in India, and has contributed much to the country's self-reliance in steel plant design and technology. It is in the forefront of new technologies and has been closely involved in the planning, design and engineering of steel and allied projects, for the Central and State Governments as well as the private sector.



Visakhapatnam : Sinter Plant foundation work in progress

Integrated Steel Plants

DASTURCO is Principal Consultant for Visakhapatnam steel project—India's first coast-based steel plant now under construction—for which it is providing comprehensive design and engineering and related services. DASTURCO is also engineering consultant for □ Silicon Steel Project of the Rourkela Steel Plant □ modernisation of TISCO, Jamshedpur □ small Integrated steel plant of Maharashtra Elektrosmelt, Chandrapur and □ Bokaro Steel Plant (in specified plant areas).

Alloy/Special Steels and Superalloys

In the alloy and special steels sector, DASTURCO is the consultant to the Alloy Steels Plant, Durgapur, both for the initial plant and Stage I Expansion; and now for its Stage II Expansion. Similarly, DASTURCO provided comprehensive design/engineering services for the Salem Steel Plant, the first phase cold rolling mills complex of which was commissioned recently.

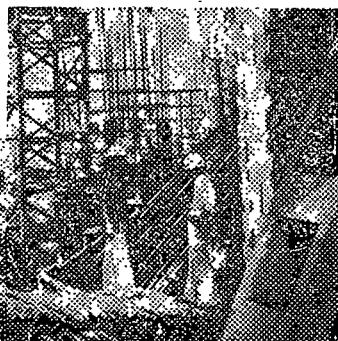
Superalloys

The firm has also designed and engineered Midhani's Superalloys Plant at Hyderabad, for the production of strategic metals and alloys—one of the most sophisticated and complex metallurgical plants in the world.

Sponge Iron Plant

DASTURCO provided comprehensive design and engineering services for the sponge iron plant at Kothagudem—India's first direct reduction plant.

Visakhapatnam : Commencement of construction on the Blast Furnace



Sponge iron plant, Kothagudem: Direct reduction unit with waste gas cleaning facility

Export of Know-how

As in India, DASTURCO has been actively engaged in the planning of steel development in the Arab world, South-east Asia, Africa and Latin America. It has so far handled over 100 consultancy assignments in the developing world. The largest is the prestigious Misurata Iron and Steel Complex in Libya, now under construction, for which DASTURCO is the Principal Consultant.

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*Total Engineering—
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The job of a merchant banker negotiating a foreign currency loan with international syndication is no bed of roses. Persuasion based on a solid basis of carefully collated facts and figures is a must.

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STEEL
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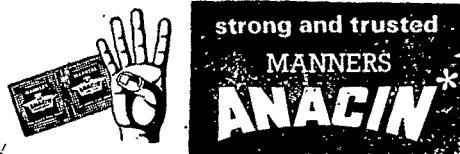
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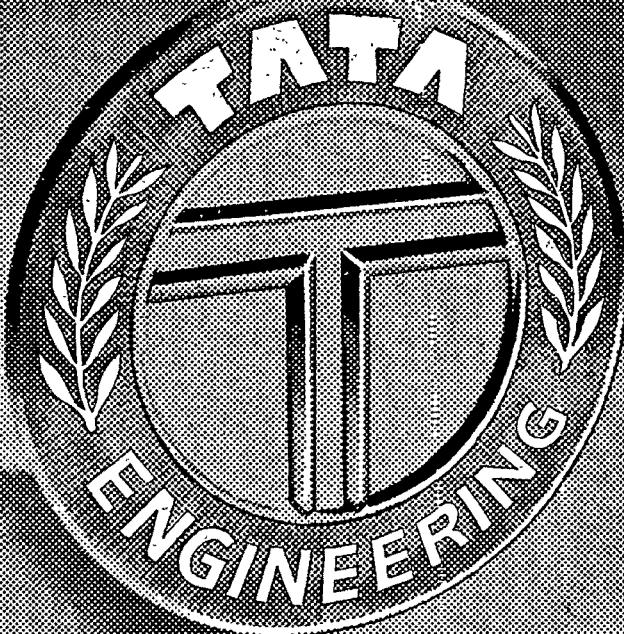


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GM-1-82

SEMINAR, JANUARY 1983

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is one way of expressing
our responsibility...**



**the other way is by
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Over 3,00,000 public carriers on the road today are Tata vehicles. Carrying essential commodities to the remotest parts of the country, extending communication links, doing duty on vital project-sites.

Each Tata vehicle provides employment to no less than 10 people. Creating over 4 lakh new job opportunities every year.

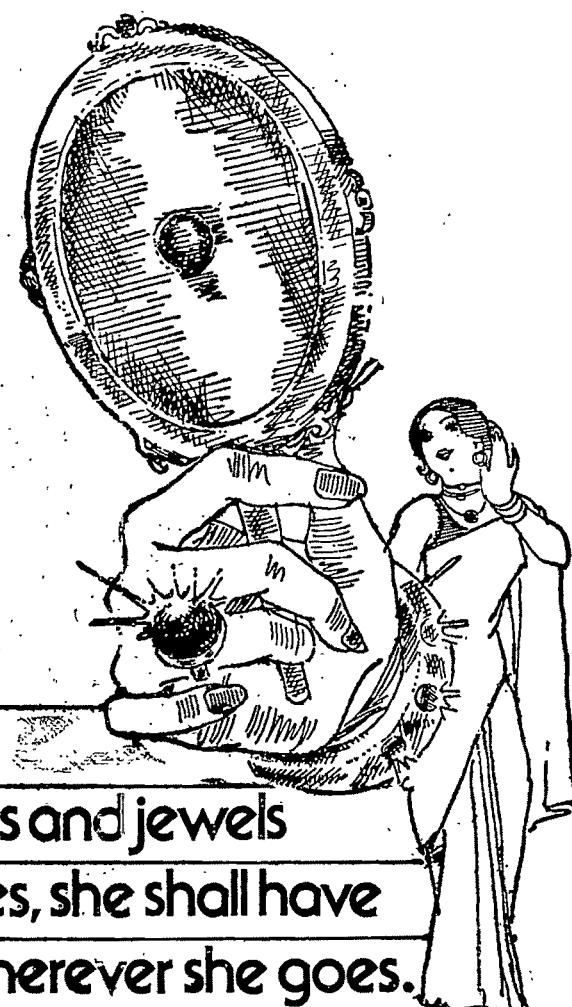
These are but two of the most striking facets of our multi-faceted outlook in serving the country. Now and in the future.

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CHAITRA-T-663



**With gems
on her fingers and jewels
on her toes, she shall have
aluminium wherever she goes.**

Because, when time began and all things material were created, aluminium combined with various elements to make up precious stones like the sapphire, the ruby, the Oriental amethyst and emerald, the topaz, the turquoise and the jade. Today, aluminium is being used, more and more, for things we had never imagined before. And in India, Indian Aluminium has been the catalyst of this progress.

The first to embark on aluminium

production in India, Indal has introduced almost the entire range of alloys in which rolled and extruded aluminium products are made in this country. In its constant drive towards diversification, Indal has pioneered the use of aluminium in aircraft, currency, power transmission, irrigation tubing, transportation, packaging, housing and a host of other applications.

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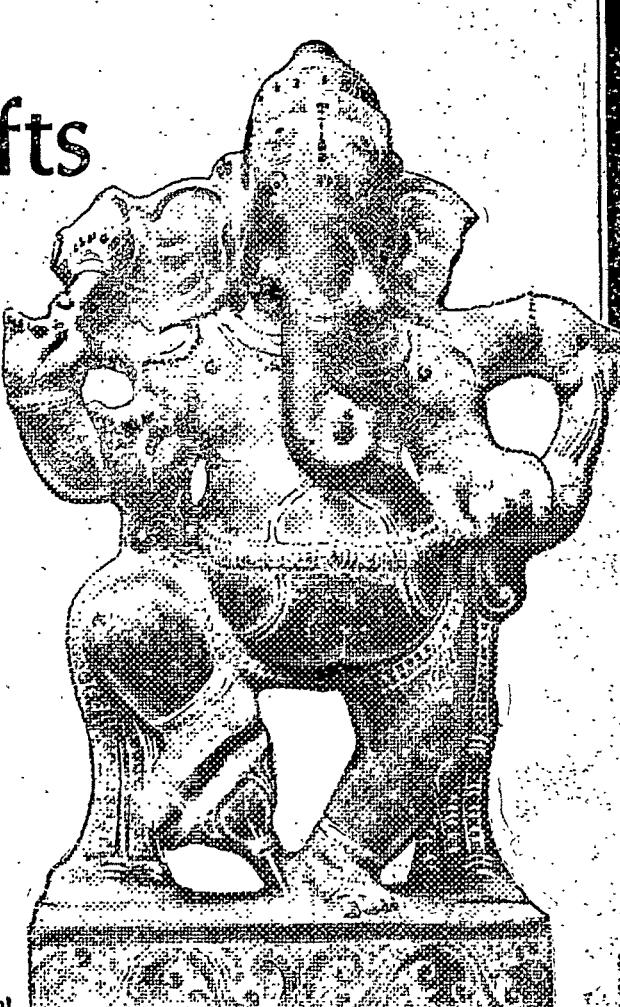
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"A royal umbrella, a wheel, footprints ... for if He had attained 'Nirvana' and escaped the wheel of life altogether, He could not be pictured as a man like other men."

- J.V. Vincent, "India, The Many Storeyed House".



Sanchi stands alone, in silent peace, away from the ancient and beaten paths of India's many invaders. Here, on the serene banks of the Betwa River stand the Buddhist stupas, of which the finest is the Great Stupa.

Started in Asokan times, these Buddhist shrines and monasteries were carved by craftsmen from Vidisha, who once worked with ivory. And in some strange way the stones seem touched with an almost unreal, translucent quality. Look closely — you will see that no two pillars are quite the same.

The 'toranas' or gateways are carved to represent the life and teachings of the Enlightened One, and the richness of life in the Sunga period.

As you see and 'read' the carvings, you find yourself in hushed

silence — for you now commune with the Holy One.

Walking the path of righteousness to the Great Stupa which stands like an inverted bowl under a turquoise sky, you feel the awe that Asoka felt before going forth to spread His teachings to the world.

You feel a presence. Not of loneliness or emptiness — but of solitude, peace — and serenity that is hallowed.

Near Sanchi, you can also visit the Udaigiri caves, Heliodorus' pillar, the Vidisha Museum and the exquisite

temple at Udayeshwar.

BHOPAL

The city set around a lake.

Picturesque Bhopal (the state capital) is 46 kms. from Sanchi, and stands on the site of an old city founded in the 11th century by Raja Bhoj, a great patron of art and learning.

Visit Bhimbetka, which has the richest group of rock shelter paintings in the world; Bhojpur, with its massive incomplete Saivite temple; picnic spots like Islampur; and the majestic fort of Ginnorgarh.

SANCHI

MADHYA PRADESH

The very heart of India.

Useful Information

Best season: Throughout the year

How to reach: Air : The nearest airport is Bhopal.

Rail : Sanchi is a station on the Jhansi-Itarsi section of the Central Railway.

Bus : Sanchi is well connected with bus services to Bhopal, Indore, Sagar, Gwalior and Vidisha.

M.P. State Tourism Corporation operates conducted tours to Sanchi from Bhopal.

Sanchi is 46 kms from Bhopal

Bhopal

Best season: Throughout the year.

How to reach: Air : Indian Airlines operates daily flights to Bhopal from Delhi, Gwalior, Indore and Bombay. Bhopal is also

connected with tri-weekly flights to Raipur and Jabalpur.

Rail : Bhopal is on the Delhi-Madras main line. Major trains going

from Bombay to Delhi via Jhansi also pass through Bhopal.

Bus : Bhopal is well connected by bus services to Indore, Mandu, Ujjain, Sanchi, Gwalior, Shivpuri, Jabalpur, Pachmarhi, Khajuraho, Nagpur and Jaipur.

Bhopal is 542 kms from Agra, 739 kms from Bombay, 746 kms from Delhi, 187 kms from Indore, 540 kms from Kanha, 387 kms from Khajuraho, 290 kms from Mandu, 210 kms from Pachmarhi and 424 kms from Gwalior.

Where to stay: Panchanan Hotel (M.P. Tourism Corporation). Tariff: A/C - Rs. 70 - single, Rs 100 - double.

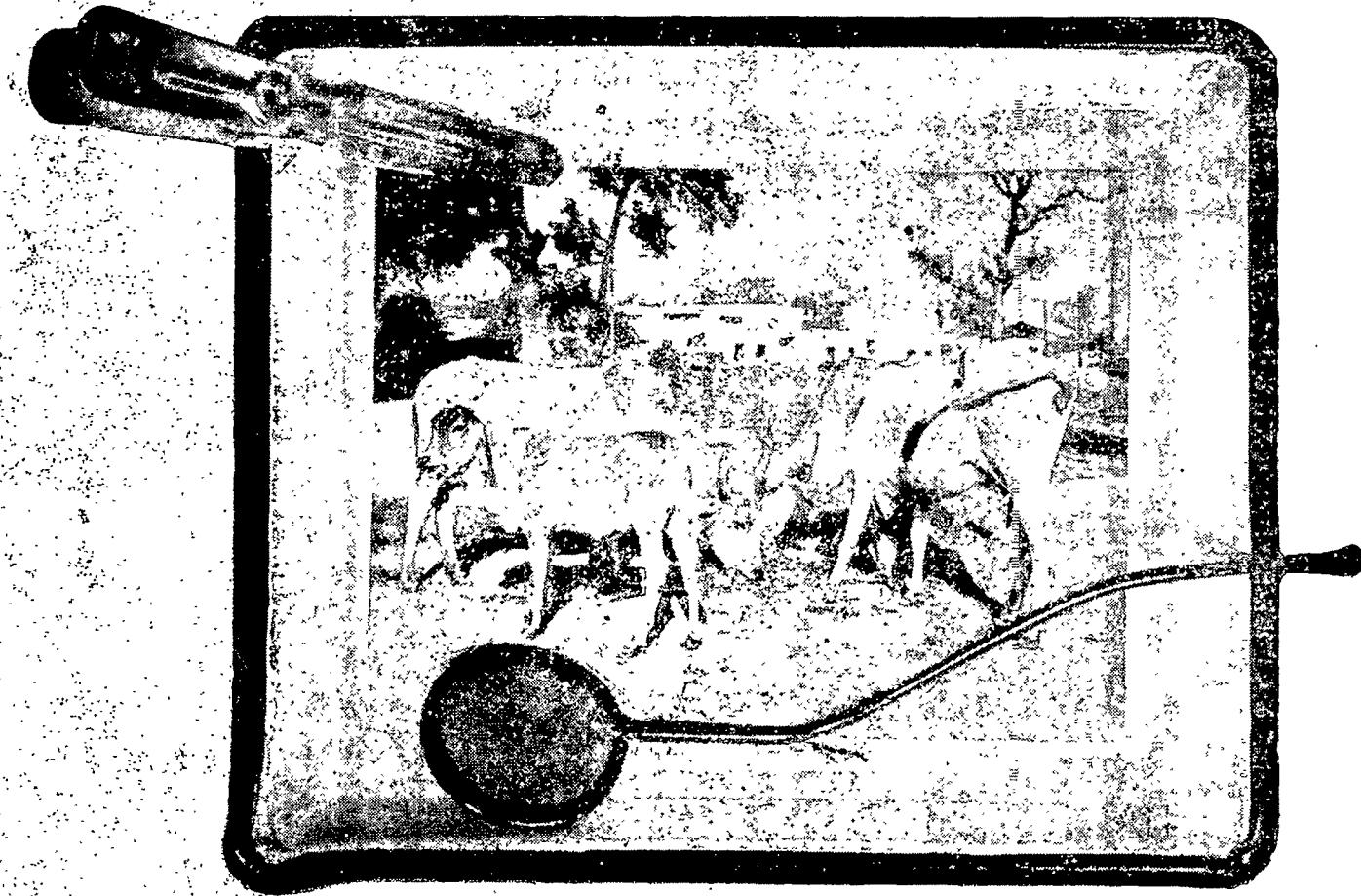
Non-A/C - Rs. 40 - single, Rs. 60 - double.

For reservations, contact: Manager, Panchanan Hotel, New Market, Bhopal Telephone 63047

Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation, Gangotri, T T Nagar, Bhopal 462003

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THE MONTHLY SYMPOSIUM POST BOX 338 NEW DELHI

a journal which seeks to reflect through free discussion, every shade of Indian thought and aspiration. Each month, a single problem is debated by writers belonging to different persuasions. Opinions expressed have ranged from Janata to Congress, from Sarvodaya to Communist to independent. And the non-political

specialist too has voiced his views. In this way it has been possible to answer a real need of today, to give the facts and ideas of this age and to help thinking people arrive at a certain degree of cohesion and clarity facing the problems of economics, of politics, of cul-

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managing editor/RAJ THAPAR

production/TEJBIR SINGH

circulation/C.B. KU

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NEXT MONTH: THE FORGOTTEN MILLION

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INDIA 1982

a symposium on

the year

that was

symposium participants

A FRAGMENTED NATION

Rajni Kothari, Professor of Political Science, Delhi University

THE NEW LEADERS

H. K. Paranjape, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune

THE CENTRE

Ashok Mitra, former Finance Minister, Government of West Bengal, now Visiting Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta

WAVE OF VIOLENCE

K. F. Rustamji, former Director General, Border Security Force

BETWEEN HOTHOUSE AND COLD SHOWER

Mrinal Datta Chaudhuri, Professor, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi

RETOOLING

Dinesh Mohan, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

THE DEFENCE BURDEN

Jaswant Singh, Member of Parliament, Bharatiya Janata Parishad

CONFUSION AMONG THE NATIONS

Rajeshwar Dayal, former Secretary General, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

THE REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Jagat S. Mehta, former Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

REFLECTIONS FOR 1982

Rajinder Puri, Cartoonist and Journalist

INDEX

A complete index of the twelve issues of 1982 and Seminar's titles from one to two hundred and eighty one

COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

A fragmented nation

RAJNI KOTHARI

IT was a bizarre year. Important heads rolled, often under pressure from 'public opinion'. But it made no difference, even to so-called public opinion. A sense of sordid delight and scandal accompanied each discomfiture, each 'investigatory' revelation. And that seemed to be the end. New heads were fixed on the mast called government. But it didn't matter. Those in power had no greater power than those out of or ousted from power. It seemed that government had come to a standstill.

It wasn't that the State had 'withered away' in the visionary sense of a Gandhi or a Marx, either through the 'concentric circles' entering the consciousness of all or through resolution of major 'contradictions', in either case there being no need of coercive authority. No, here coercion was if anything on a precipitate increase — more bullets, more lathis, more deaths in lock-ups and 'encounters', more *julum* in all respects — and yet the State as State was nowhere in sight. It had withered away in the literal sense of writhing, of decay and slow demise.

In the political sphere, the Congress party, at one time the mainstay of the operating system, was not only in shambles but also in shreds — not 'factions' as some still mistake to call them, just small herds moving hither and thither without rhyme or reason, not even for self-interest any more. Even the proverbial zero-sum game was not identifiable in the helter-skelter behaviour of so-called Congressmen. No shrewd manoeuvres or bargains were made apart from dishing out more and more cash for keeping less and less people loyal. Cartoonists had a field-day as had the unending stream of mediators

and emissaries — the only operating political structure.

In the economy, statistics were being rolled out to show how many percentage points the nation had moved forward in its march towards 'progress', but from all accounts agricultural production had remained stagnant throughout 1980-82 (not just this year of drought), both industrial licensing and imports had been liberalised but without benefit to either consumer prices or availability of basic necessities for the people at large. Much of the energy of the Indian government was spent in begging for foreign funds — 'soft' and cheap if possible and hard and exploitative if need be — to bail it out of its domestic mess for the time being even though it might put it into a greater mess in the long run.

All this was underwritten by a clean and pampered chit from the World Bank and a warm handshake from Mr. Reagan. A helpless government was putting on a brave face and cashing in on its helplessness for the sake of survival.

Such a helpless and tottering government that was keen on succour from outside for hiding its misery at home did of course indulge in massive extravaganzas which generated a lot of noise and claptrap apart from costing a fortune. There were the Festival of India meant for British audiences for which almost all of Indian 'culture' was transported, the Asian games which 'changed the face of Delhi' and the grand trip of Mrs. Gandhi to the great American land, a trip she thoroughly enjoyed from all accounts (what a relief from the humdrum of not running the Indian State). By contrast, the visit to the Soviet Union was a tame affair; its politics also being more stagnant

than the one of 'opening up' to the West.

All this was happening when the famine in north India, especially Bihar, was taking a heavy toll; a large number of people were dying of starvation. There were no relief works as in old times, no one like JP to mobilise the funds and the devotion of young men and women, no press coverage (because no official handouts), producing a strange suspension of the nation's conscience at the plight of the hungry and the dying.

The Asiad edifice had been erected, as many such extravagant structures in the middle ages, through the ruthless exploitation of migrant labour and this not by private capital but by the agencies of the State. The former have been reduced to bonded labour according to a number of investigations, and even the Supreme Court intervention (which was clever in avoiding direct censure of the State or its officials but revealing all the same).¹

This was in the capital itself, and on a project by which the government had staked all its prestige — and a large measure of its resources — to put up a grand show.² Elsewhere it was far worse. There is no need to recount the tales of atrocities and burnings and decimation of the rural poor. It is all of a piece and underlines the bastardly nature of the Indian ruling class and the bearers of law and order.

There has been a very sharp rise in interpersonal crime, in the role of goondaism in local affairs, in physical plunder and loot of community resources and in sheer spread of a sense of terror among ordinary people ('law-abiding citizens' as they say). There has been an organised and precipitate increase in prostitution at all levels of society. Rape itself has become an organised crime, carried out at the behest of established interests, politically motivated and, more often than not, collec-

tively expressed. There has also taken place an increase in child labour under increasingly harrowing conditions not incomparable to and in some cases worse than the state of child labour in early nineteenth century England on which so much has been written. And, lets make no mistake, all this is happening not due to any sudden lack of scruples here and there but as part of the inexorable logic of economic exploitation that is inherent in the model of economic development and progress we have gone in for.

Overall, both due to the erosion of democratic institutions and the consequent decline in the corrective role of the State and due to the logic of capitalist growth, the checks and controls which are gradually wearing off, there has taken place a striking and astounding decline in the value of life and in standards of moral rectitude in the behaviour of the Indian elite and in fact of the Indian people as a whole. Stories of atrocities, murder, rape and molestation don't any longer lead to a public outcry, much less a sense of shame, guilt or remorse. In fact, acts of manhandling or misdemeanour of women or young couples by ruffians (many from affluent families) is being accepted as normal.

This is no longer restricted to Delhi and Bombay. As a matter of fact, the rural areas — and many of the tribal heartlands — are increasingly being managed and mauled by mafia groups who provide a new form of law and order under their own *bandobust* (of which the police is just a part).

There have, of course, been endless reports, writ petitions, independent inquiries and investigative teams, a growing spate of demonstrations, rallies and *morchas* all ending in petitions to the authorities, *padyatras* to attract attention and educate the public and a considerable spurt of grass-roots activism indicating a major upsurge in consciousness.

Even here, though, there is beginning to take place an entry of new elements which threatens to transform local protests into playgrounds for lumpen elements from relatively

prosperous strata who have taken to new types of guerilla-formations, muscle power and open banditry. Quite often, these are individuals with political connections, usually from or on the margin of the ruling party. Genuine political activists and civil liberty groups are unable to stem this perfidious growth in their midst. And no political party worth the name has even considered entering the fray. If anything, most of them make use of these mafia elements for their own immediate gain.

What does this sordid scenario add up to? Wherefrom are its causes to be perceived and some comprehension of their interconnections provided? What, in short, are the *macro* tendencies at work which have produced these *micro* results (dissatisfactory as these concepts are)?³

First, it seems to me that two seemingly contradictory processes have been at work throughout the seventies which have got accentuated in the eighties with the popular election of a government with an authoritarian mandate. One is the sharp and systemic increase in authoritarianism in the running of the State and the management of power. And the other is a gradual decline in authority of those in positions of power and a loosening grip on the national situation by this leadership. The result is both an increase in the repressive character and an increase in the vulnerability of the State apparatus and the wielders of power in it.

3. I do not believe in an overarching and unified analytical frame or explanatory model, be it bourgeois, Marxist or Gandhian, that can account for all phenomena, even all the major ones. We do not live in a rational, law-governed, world. The heyday of nationalism and modernity is over. We live in a world in which on the one hand new and deeper layers of human consciousness are proving to be politically relevant and on the other hand men and women are losing control over social processes and there appears to be a loss of any sense of certainty or confidence and an increasing recourse to all manner of escapism, above all an escape from the political process. Whatever analysis one offers in dealing with a given situation must therefore be informed by humility and an awareness that much more is at work than one seems to understand.

1. I call the judgement 'clever' because nowhere does it hold anyone responsible for what were clearly blatant violations of the labour laws of the land.

2. There was an unprecedented facelift given to the city.

The two processes are only seemingly contradictory. In reality, the two are bound to go together in a continental polity operating in a fundamentally diverse and federal society. Here, the more authoritarian a regime, the less authority it will wield and, before long, as has already happened, the in-built diversity of an integrated whole gets transformed into a process of fragmentation and a source of tension, suspicion and antagonism.

The theory of a hard State is wholly ill-suited to a society like ours. The same applies to the theory of a strong central authority at the expense of State and regional power, presumably for greater integration and sense of unity. Here, the reverse is likely to take place as has already happened — loss of power at all levels, a weak centre sitting on top of anaemic States which in turn are unable to weld local communities into a well-knit region.

The sum total is a decline of authority at all levels which in turn leads to a nervous use of coercive power, especially at lower levels, a growing sense of insecurity leading to indulgence in corrupt practices by all, and a dissolution of all affiliations that had provided the mainstay of party identities and cohesion.

Secondly, crucial to this decline of authority and cohesion has been the erosion of intermediate institutions between the centre and the localities — the party system, the federal structure, the wide range of autonomous bodies at local levels, the large array of political mediators and the link men between the government and the people. And this has happened just at a time when demands and pressures from the base of the polity are on the increase, the range of conflicts calling for local solutions (instead of reference upwards) has widened, the political process has become increasingly regionalised and engulfs far more than the English educated urban elite.

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Two reasons have contributed to this erosion of intermediate institutions which are crucial to the

Indian model of democratic governance, indeed any governance.⁴ First, there was a systematic undermining of these institutions under the impact of, on the one hand, a centralising and, on the other hand, a populist and plebiscitary model of democracy. For this, not just the top leadership but, also, the political functionaries operating at lower tiers and the people themselves — especially the minorities and the deprived among them who have always been willing targets of populist appeals — have been responsible.

Second, however, the earlier structure of both government and party had also proven unequal to the new challenges of a political process which had moved beyond elite equations and had acquired a mass base.⁵ Mrs. Gandhi held out the promise of carving out a new structure that would have responded to the new reality but failed to deliver and, in the process, created a massive vacuum following the undermining of the old structure. The vacuum is now being filled in by lumpen elements, professional hoodlums, the police and political upstarts legitimized by the Sanjay effect in Indian politics.

The third point which is related to the first two is that, lacking a dynamic mediation of intermediate institutions, the model of representative democracy has, over a long period now, failed to deal with the problems thrown up by a wide-ranging and multi-tier federal polity which is at the same time caste-ridden and deeply fragmented, especially at the lower tiers. The process of democratic politics in a nation State whose hierarchy became increasingly de-institutionalised necessarily led to a negation of democratic values; the more the democratic process seeped downwards, the more pulverised and distraught it became.

4. I have developed the full thesis of 'intermediate aggression' in my *Politics in India*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1970.

5. On this see D.L. Sheth, 'Politics of Caste-Conflicts', *Seminar* (233), Annual Number, 1979 as well as his more recent 'Social Basis of Political Crisis', *Seminar* (269), Annual Number, 1982.

At the same time, loss of vision at the higher levels and failure to steer the democratic process through the federal nexus undermined the intermediate orders and reinforced the power of vested interests at the lower levels. These interests have now got interlocked with national and international structures of corporate capitalism and technobureaucracy and have permeated and overtaken the macro structures of party, government and parliamentary institutions.

This has, in turn, produced a craving for an apolitical and technocratic society, politics being considered the chief impediment. As politics cannot so easily be weeded out, however, what has taken place is a process of constant pressures and counter-pressure before which civil authority is being increasingly beleaguered and rendered impotent.

Such an interlocking of non-political interests and the de-institutionalization of political interests has not only rendered civil authority impotent; it is also forcing the latter to fall in line with the ruthless logic of the former. The result is a dual battering of public offices (and their holders) — from vested interests and from the public.

The era of a large measure of autonomy of the political process is fast drawing to a close. The only way the 'system' can hold on under such conditions is by resort to force, on the one hand, and letting things take their own shape, on the other, the latter usually under the influence of money power. Whether it be the relationship between police and local *dadas*, or between economic planning and economic performance, or between agro-forestry and environmental policy, or between the public sector and the government, the picture is the same: everyone is living off the system with no one investing in it.

It indicates a transformation in the nature of the Indian State from being a mediator in the interplay of interests for the public good to being a prisoner of the same for private gain. Such a State not only

becomes vulnerable to larger historical forces, e.g., international capitalism. It becomes so, less out of design and more out of loss of grip, control, even comprehension of what is unfolding and what lies ahead.

It has been a misleading theory to put all blame on 'one person rule' and the resultant undermining of everyone else. This may have been true a few years ago. Today, with the decline in the autonomy of the State as an institution and the ascendancy of other interests (national and international) the equation may be turning the other way around, with the 'subedars' making hay and consolidating their power while Mrs. Gandhi holds the system from collapsing — for them to make more hay. Increasingly, it will not be they who will do her bidding but the other way around.

That brings me to the fourth and last point I want to make. Despite the considerable weakening of its authority, the Indian system shows no signs of imminent breakdown or collapse. It has, rather, achieved what may be called a low level equilibrium and it is likely to stay that way unless a major intervention of public weal takes place of which there seems to be little indication.

True, such survival will be increasingly hinged on the system becoming more and more bloody at micro levels as well as permitting a lot of violence and crime to take place in the social arena. But it will remain on the whole bloodless and at least outwardly respectable and presentable at the top. True also that such survival will, increasingly, by giving in to pressures instead of stemming them, lead to a virtual state of atrophy with incalculable damage to the future well-being and, even, survival of the poorer and exploited strata. More and more, this will undermine its minimum obligations. But then so high is the value of survival among our rulers, that no price would seem too high to pay.

There are other reasons for such survival. The Indian State is too important to be allowed to fall apart. Too much is at stake both for locally entrenched interests and

for the international status quo. Whenever in trouble (including any serious challenge to the status quo) it has been and will be bailed out in the future — economically, politically and strategically.

And, yet, with all the support that India can muster, it is not likely to either bring the antecedent system back into position or improvise a radically new one, not in the near future at any rate. It is too powerful to be brought down but too unstable and lacking in institutional anchorage to be built towards a higher level of equilibrium. The latter entails undertaking major structural changes which will be opposed tooth and nail by the very interests that want the system to survive. Indeed, every input of resource or policy change that comes from outside the political arena is likely to make the system more dependent, vulnerable and fragile.

Nor do I think that any of the existing opposition parties, or combinations thereof, can bring about any basic change in the level of performance. Some tinkering, yes, some improvement in some specific aspect, yes, but no overall change. Though not confined to any party in power, the loss of authority applies more to the Congress (I) than to some others. The rot that has set in is too deep, has been long in the making and has proceeded irrespective of changes in governments and the constant shuffling and reshuffling of ministries.

It is also often said that so much of opposition effort is concentrated on destabilizing the regime with little evidence of any ability to provide a genuine alternative. The moot question is: will such destabilization — which is very much on the cards given the virtual collapse of the Congress party organization — also destabilize the system? This may well be and even without any major opposition push or electoral setback. Defeat of the Congress(I) in elections will only be symptomatic of a more basic void. I think, institutionally, we have entered a period of rapid erosion of the Congress with nothing taking its place, with a likely breakdown of authority

and eclipse of State power in large parts of the country's hinterland and with fragments of the ruling elite pulling in opposite directions, bringing government to a standstill.

The system that will still 'go on' will become increasingly devoid of internal substance. The urge will be to shift attention outward, partly arising from a feeling of impotence and exhaustion in dealing with the domestic situation, and partly arising from the need to seek international props to a fragile and non-performing system. This process has already begun. It is hoped that somehow the economy can turn the corner through such support, following the advice of prestigious economists and financial administrators, both Indian and foreign,⁶ advice that was seized upon by a government desperately in need of some way out of the mess it was in.

Bit by bit, the Indian leadership seems to be catching up with other Third World elites (no doubt with notable exceptions) wishing to be bailed out of domestic crisis by international finance and military deals. In fact, it could not be otherwise. A policy that has lost its autonomy vis-a-vis other interests at home is bound to lose autonomy vis-a-vis the outside world too.

Acountry like India faces two main alternatives: to find a place in the oligopolistic framework of modern imperialism and pay the political price for getting the benefits of such a choice, or strengthen the all-round democratic process at home which would include a policy of economic self-reliance (by mobilising internal resources and related policies like import substitution) and fulfilment of basic needs of the people by opening up the internal market which, in turn, would require the elite to share the gains of development and forego a part of the surplus resulting from accumulation.

6. There are important exceptions, of course. Soon after the IMF loan a group of economists, most though not all of them left-leaning, met in Calcutta and issued a strong denunciation of it. See in this connection, I.S. Gulati, IMF Conditionality, Kale Memorial Lecture, June, 1982.

Thinking in the earlier decades appeared to favour the latter course (though no doubt the technological model that was adopted for realising the same was erroneous) while in recent years we seem to have deliberately made the former choice. It is a choice to join forces with international monopoly capital and to reap the advantages thereof for domestic entrenched interests.

In the meanwhile, it is hoped that the domestic social and political forces can be held at bay, be it the state of the Congress party, the threat from the opposition, the growing movements of protest from the various regions, the discontent in the different ranks of the governing structures, or the challenge posed by sections of the press and the judiciary. Stemming these various forces is not likely to be easy. Surprises are in store. The system is increasingly on the defensive — as evidenced by the fate of the Forest Bill, the Bihar Press Bill and the Hospitals and Other Institutions Bill on all of which public furore has led not to a reversal of policy — it is not a government that bows graciously to public opinion — but gradual backtracking resulting in virtual revamping of intended measures.

It seems even more defensive in dealing with more dangerous forms of challenge to its authority and the integrity of the country or to cleverly manipulated forms of defiance (as in the Bombay strikes). Anti-government forces of various kinds are growing in confidence even if some of this may be wishful, misplaced or exaggerated and even if the opposition parties are ill-equipped to provide a real alternative, and other movements of protest and confrontation are still fragmented and dispersed.

The point is that a weak opposition and fragmented ranks of more radical groups are matched by a weak and fragmented government making even the present low level equilibrium difficult to maintain. The temptation to ward this off by short-circuiting the democratic process seems quite likely under the circumstances. It does not matter who does it or through which pre-

cise formula of suspension of democratic rights — modelled on the Emergency or through the imposition of a presidential system or by some other device. What matters is that such thinking on an alternative arrangement is already on, arising largely from the incapacity to manage a democratic system. Much of the substance of democratic politics has already gone; only the forms remain. But forms too have their compulsions and hence the periodic outbursts of attack against them.

This then is the national scenario against which thinking about 'what is to be done' must take place. First, a centralising and increasingly authoritarian system has undermined not just rights and freedoms but the larger unity and coherence of the national polity as well. Second, the authority of such a system is on the wane and in jitters, defensive against both the assaults for destabilizing the national polity and the growing forces of protest and defiance, even if a large part of such defiance is still carried out within the system. Third, we know enough about existing political parties, both Congress and Opposition, to realize that the challenge to the ruling oligarchy that they will provide is not likely to produce any basic change in the operation of the system.

Fourth, as regards sources of challenge from outside the mainstream — from the very large number of micro movements to larger movements of the peasants, the *dalits*, the tribals and the struggle for self-determination by ethnic minorities — it is becoming increasingly clear that those who have acquired control of the system's operation are determined to quash them through the coercive power of the State, through cooptation or through isolating different strata and enfeebling them.

Fragmentation is nowhere as endemic and pervasive as in the various activist organisations and movement groups operating at the grass-roots, more than in the ruling and opposition parties though no doubt the virus is fast spreading in the latter too. In fact, in the case of

these non party political foundations, the fragmentation is of a dual type: by focussing their energy in discrete micro settings they remain at a big remove from the macro processes of transformation; and even within the micro movements they remain isolated and alienated from each other.

Many remain single constituency movements — women's, ecology, press freedom, anti-nuclear, regional autonomy etc. — lacking in a larger comprehension and vision that could at once consolidate each arena of struggle and bring them together under a common banner and for a common goal. Without this larger perspective, it will not be possible to deal with the backlash from entrenched interests and classes which feel threatened but are not yet willing to negotiate structural changes in the distribution of power and access to resources and positions.

The position of these groups has become more vulnerable with the erosion of the State apparatus and the inability of the administration and the lower courts to provide justice. To repeat a point already made, the more fragile the State, the more vulnerable the lower ranks of the people. The task that faces the leaders of these various movements is to think in terms of restoring a sense of unity and purpose and, with this in view, restructuring the Indian State and the various elements that comprise it. The challenge that faces us all — activists, intellectuals and parties — is a total one and cannot be fragmented into bits and pieces. For, that would result in fragmentation of action which in effect means inaction in so far as the larger social reality is concerned.

The potential for generating a political process that spawns both the local and the national (and international) is, of course, immense in India. We are in the midst of a major convulsion of human consciousness, at all levels and in all strata (including, interestingly, in sections of the elite). This is also affecting institutions and making their operators turn a new leaf in their professions — in journalism, in the judiciary, in research insti-

tions, in the trade union field, in the organisation of the poor and the unorganised (as well as the unemployed and under-employed) whose ranks are swelling under the impact of the new technology and the new international division of labour.

For the first time, this stirring of consciousness is getting transformed into political action and is slowly affecting deep-seated perceptions about the role and limits of specific institutions like the judiciary, the press and academic institutions.

What is lacking is a more aggregate effort, aggregated in a distinctly political idiom, pursued on a national scale, visible as a national alternative — drawing on and, indeed, providing full scope to the various strands of local, regional and socio-economic struggles, drawing also on new role perceptions and new energy generated in the functioning of major institutions (like the press and the judiciary) but enabling them all to join in a common and political task. They all need to be informed by a common elan and thrust, the diverse voices joining in a symphony that cannot but be heard, respected and admired.

Now, this is a role that only the intellectuals can perform—catalyzing the myriad strands in national consciousness and providing them with a common elan, a new language and dimension.

On the one hand, the task sounds stupendous. On the other the spaces that have become available for action are so large, and the disarray in the ranks of the ruling class so acute, that all one has to do is to provide a much needed boost and morale to the struggling forces.

Both the theory of development and that of the modern State on which the institutional and programmatic premises of contemporary nation-building were based were provided by the country's intelligentsia. Today, the whole paradigm on which these theoretical models and operational plans were constructed has run its course and there is need for major rethinking on a variety of socio-political and techno-

economic tasks. Ordinarily, intellectuals are ill-equipped to deal with the pragmatics of the political process. But, things have ceased to be ordinary, however. It is time for intervention.

Ever since Mrs. Gandhi's return to power, it has been argued, both by apologists and scribes of the regime and by those who would like the regime to perform better, that if only intellectuals were to cooperate with the government things would be better. On the whole, barring a very few exceptions, the response has been resoundingly negative. More recently, however, taking advantage of the painstakingly created image that there was no alternative to Mrs. Gandhi, subtle social efforts are under way for winning over academics and other intellectuals or simply disarming and neutralizing them where the former is not possible. But this dinner and conference diplomacy all seems marginal without any strong conviction on either side. Like everything else, this cultivation of the learned by the agents of the State sounds bizarre and on balance more amusing than a cause for anxiety.

Cooptation of the learned by rulers has of course a long and hallowed pedigree. There exists a whole state of art about it. Napoleonic practised it and so did Stalin. The *Arthashastra* and other writings of Chanakya are full of it. Nothing like that seems to have ever been attempted here, now or earlier under Nehru. Among other things, it calls for politicians who are supremely confident of themselves and are willing to promote independence of thought and expression in their midst and, indeed, benefit from it. Here, on the other hand, the search is for safe and suave individuals and sycophants. Such an environment is bound to alienate intellectuals, at any rate those who are keen on their dignity and self-respect.

Intellectuals in contemporary India face a wholly different task — of giving voice to the conscience of the nation, being concerned about its quality and integrity (which also entails saving it from narrow doctrines of a chauvinistic kind) and from time to time, reminding the rest

of the elite, especially the political elite, of basic norms and values that should provide the humane basis of the State, transcending ideological dogma and populist clichés.

If they are to fulfil this role, however, and that too in a period of drift and disintegration, it is necessary for them to move away from their narrow specialist moorings and their misplaced arrogance, stop treating knowledge as a process of accumulation unrelated to political tasks, and discard methods of science that are inimical to social values and the public good. A new process of knowledge is called for, a basically political process that makes praxis the arbiter of theory. With this will end the intellectual's alienation from reality.

The real question then is: will the Indian intellectual rise to the occasion and take on a transformed role in a transforming situation? Will he be able to transcend his proclivity to sit in judgement over others without any sense of obligation to them and his other proclivity towards individualism and personal ego and arrogance? Will he be able to rub shoulders with activists and leaders and ranks of mass movements in a common pursuit of a collective identity? Will he be able to 'sacrifice' his immediate selfish advantages and thus become entitled to deference of others on the basis not of status but of intellect? Will he be able to overcome the 'hardness of heart of the middle classes' which Gandhiji had found to be the main stumbling block in his effort to mobilize the nation?

The basic malady that faces us is all-round fragmentation. Fragmentation of the nation, of political parties, of movements, of the Indian people, of the intelligentsia. What is more, this is also the malady that affects a great deal of extremely good, innovative and transformative efforts that are under way. It follows that the most central task that faces us is one of aggregating these diverse efforts towards a new crystallization that is avowedly political but not political in the way in which party politicians see things. Hence the role of the catalysts of consciousness, the intellectuals.

The new leaders

H. K. PARANJAPE

INDIA has had the unique experience among the newly independent developing countries of having operated a largely free and democratic society for a period of over 30 years. An important result of this has been the increasing degree of politicisation of the common people in India. This does not necessarily mean a rational or even a clearly class oriented political awareness. What it does imply, however, is an increasing awareness that there is no natural law under which they should continue to suffer poverty, degradation or large scale inequality; that there is a certain rivalry among different groups of leaders for their support and for their vote, and that this can be exploited in their self interest; and, further, that there are many methods of agitation open to them to ensure that their demands are not ignored and that the changes which they want can be brought about.

Of course, the degree of awareness varies considerably from urban to rural, from the educated to the illiterate, and communications make a difference. Leadership also matters a great deal. Thus, having had an Ambedkar, the scheduled castes in Maharashtra have developed much greater awareness than those in States like Uttar Pradesh or Bihar.

An educated Church leadership has created better awareness of their rights among the tribals in the North East as compared to the tribals in States like Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat or Maharashtra

The other special feature of the contemporary Indian scene is the competition in vocal radicalism which practically all competing leadership-groups have indulged in. There has been increasing use of populist slogans. The ruling party itself adopted the 'socialist pattern of society', to begin with, as its objective. The opposition parties of various hues have not lagged behind. While it is true that, with a number of elections and electoral battles having taken place, a certain degree of scepticism has developed among the common people about these slogans, they have at least succeeded in making them somewhat aware of the possibilities open to them.

At the same time, the gap between promises and practice has been steadily widening. 'Land to the tiller' has been spoken about from before Independence; but, after the initial abolition of formal *zamindaris*, little progress has been achieved: the countryside in most regions continues to be backward and neglec-

ted. The removal of unemployment and improvement in the standard of living have been assured time and time again; but almost half the population continues to live in degradation and poverty.

At the same time, there is an increasing feeling among many sections of the people that better living is not unachievable. If the increasingly popular cinema has done nothing else, the film shows have made even ordinary people aware of the elite standards of living. The elite sections have improved their consumption very rapidly since Independence and their numbers have also multiplied. The demonstration effect of elite living is increasingly percolating the different strata of the population.

With this new awareness, there is also an increasing feeling of frustration. People have begun to realise that all leaders are long on promises and short on performance. Once the elections are over, those elected, even when they are from the same area or stratum, become alienated and find life in Delhi or the State capitals far more comfortable. Moreover, those in power purchase the support of the lower level leaders by giving them special facilities and advantages. Being a Member of Parliament or a Member of a State Legislature increasingly carries with it many privileges, and also opportunities for making money. The tendency to have large sized councils of ministers, and also appointing a number of members of the legislatures as chairmen or members of various organisations with privileges and perquisites, creates an increasing gap between the leaders and the led. There is a tendency even in lower level elected bodies such as municipalities and *Panchayati Raj* bodies to provide such special advantages to members.

The ruling party has its own compulsions. There has always been a centralising tendency in the Congress from before Independence and, except for brief periods, this has continued. In fact, Central dominance has attained unprecedented heights in the ruling party in the last ten years. The result is that those who want to obtain a worthwhile

position, may be as a Minister at the Centre or in a State, or any other position which gives some advantages and opens up possibilities of further gain and advancement, have to fall in line with the wishes of the Central leadership, whatever the real feelings, demands and requirements of their constituents. The over-all atmosphere in Delhi and State capitals is also an elitist one where the rich and powerful exert a great deal of influence. Being accepted in this ruling establishment becomes almost a compulsion for the newcomer legislators, and they tend to play safe so as not to be treated as 'outsiders'.

In fact, falling in line with the wishes of those in power in New Delhi, and at least not offending them, usually paying obeisance to them, has become almost a necessary condition for success in any walk of life. Even though it is well known that inequality and injustice not only prevail but are widening in all spheres in reality, it is not politic to lay too much stress on this except in vague terms.

Trade union leadership is expected to behave in a responsible manner. It is understood that it is expected to put up fights, make demands and carry on campaigns against employers and the government. They must demonstrate that they can succeed in securing some advantages for their constituents; but they are expected not to do it in a manner which would rock the boat. Opposition leaders and trade unionists have also usually been leftist in their orientation and have therefore accepted the logic of the official development plans which have always been couched in vaguely leftist terms.

Since the adoption of the five-year plans by the Government of India, and especially the heavy industry oriented strategy in 1955, the Left groups have been supporting the plans and their implications in terms of resource mobilisation. This implies that there must be room for growth in the finances of business undertakings, that capital formation should not be impeded and that production should not come to a halt for too long.

Trade unions in India have usually been associated in the past with political parties. Trade union leaders also aspired for positions of political leadership — trade union activities were made subservient to their political ambition. This has been an additional factor influencing the attitude of trade union leaders.

Moreover, many among the established leaders — even of the opposition parties or trade unions — not only came from a middle class background but belonged to the small English speaking and university educated elite which assumed the responsibility of not upsetting the applecart of the newly developing polity. There has therefore been a tendency not to take extreme positions.

Also, the nature of the vision of a new India has been much influenced by the middle class background of most leaders. The idea persists that India will take a quantum jump not only to modernity but to the status of an economic and political power in the world. The cost which such attempts may involve for the common people tends to get overlooked. The growth of huge metropolises, the setting up of large and prestigious projects, the adoption of up-to-date technology including attempts at a nuclear programme and a space effort, and the creation of various other symbols of a large and modern politico-economic power get higher priority than works which may be of greater relevance, based on more appropriate technology and ensuring a steady even though small improvement in the state of the common people.

That the power elite, entrenched in key positions — political or administrative, private or public, in Delhi or in State capitals — stands very much to gain in prestige as well as pelf with these kind of priorities, makes this approach all the more acceptable to them. The result has been the very skewed up and unbalanced development which we have witnessed in India in the last 35 years.

Development in various ways there certainly has been, and the

near stagnation of the pre-Independence period has been left behind. But it has been uneven in different parts of the country, and the fruits of the effort have been shared unevenly so as to create increasing resentment among the people. It is not stagnation — even over a long period — that necessarily gives rise to popular anger and movements for change. It is only when there is some change and improvement that the people become aware of what they are missing. With a largely free society, there then is increasing political awareness, resentment grows and, especially if the unequal distribution of benefits is very marked, the anger is bound to show. This is what is happening today.

This marked gap in development is visible between urban and rural areas, between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Agriculture has not been neglected. Large irrigation works have been undertaken and the acreage under assured supply of water has expanded. Rural electrification has made some progress, and pockets of prosperous agriculture have developed in certain areas. But these have remained small pockets; and the speed of their growth and coverage has recently declined. The emphasis on large irrigation projects and the allocation of resources for them have also meant that not enough has been done for small and medium projects; and certainly not enough has been done for a more equitable distribution of water, the scarcest resource in Indian agriculture, next only to land.

The majority of villagers find that, as compared to the transformation of life in urban areas, their environment and day-to-day life largely continue to be stagnant. Certainly, there are a few schools, some dispensaries, and even an occasional community radio or television set. But such benefits are confined to a very few areas. Even assured and easily accessible drinking water supply is unavailable in a large number of villages.

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At the same time, with better transport and improved communica-

cations, the farmers see how the urban folk benefit from many developments. Industrial workers and even persons with little skills doing soft jobs like messengers in offices and, certainly, clerks of various types, appear to enjoy a far better life than most farmers. Those in organised employment also have facilities for better education for their children, improved medical attendance, and a certain degree of social security.

The farmers find that they hardly have a share in any of this. Despite talk about the stabilisation of agricultural prices right from 1945, and the discussion about ensuring that middle-men like traders and money lenders should not be permitted to exploit them, they find that, to a very large extent, they continue to face a fluctuating market, and their dependence on money lenders and traders with its concomitant exploitation has not undergone any major change. In spite of the promises of political parties, and the local leaders who now frequently come from farmer-caste backgrounds, those who operationally represent government continue to be callous and corrupt. In fact, people find that their own representatives, their own caste-men, get corrupted by the system, and in effect turn their backs on the interest of the peasantry whom they are supposed to represent.

It is a notable fact that few intellectually capable and effective persons have bothered about peasant interests. In the earlier days, the Unionist Party in undivided Punjab, the Justice Party in Madras and the Non-Brahmin Party in Maharashtra to some extent genuinely represented the large and middle peasants. But the Congress movement finally carried all before it, and practically all rural leadership in the early post-Independence period merged in the Congress. Those among them who came from rural and agricultural backgrounds as, for example, in Maharashtra and Gujarat, never attained adequate status and power in the higher echelons of the party in Delhi.

Especially after Gandhiji's death, the ruling Congress has always

been dominated by the urban oriented elite led by Jawaharlal Nehru and, later, his daughter. The peasant-oriented leaders could never influence Plan thinking and overall economic policy in any effective manner. Whether it was Y.B. Chavan as a Cabinet Minister, or Vasantdada Patil as a Secretary of the Congress, they have had little influence on overall policy formulation, economic or political. They were effective as Chief Ministers, but almost nonentities in New Delhi's real decision-making.

The economists, at least the more influential ones among them, have either not taken much interest in the problems of peasants or have been content with a vaguely leftist stance. There have been exceptions like D.R. Gadgil. He did take considerable interest in practical problems affecting the farmers in Maharashtra, provided a useful intellectual backing for the reorganisation of agricultural credit facilities, and used his influence in favour of the development of co-operative sugar factories and *Panchayati Raj*. Such support helped a particular section of Maharashtra farmers to improve their economic and political position.

Most other economists have taken an approach in which the interests of the middle peasants did not matter. Except for vaguely speaking in favour of land reforms, they have been more worried about the terms of trade between agriculture and industry helping the peasants too much, and thus making capital formation and economic transformation difficult. Most of them also usually had an unexpressed contempt for the farmer and the villager. Their urban orientation was clearly indicated in that few of them ever raised questions about the urbanisation policies, and the distribution of investment as well as public expenditure between urban and rural areas.

The opposition political leadership, mainly leftist in its orientation, took the line that the peasants who could benefit from steps like appropriate agricultural prices and even from agricultural investments would be 'kulaks'. They therefore

thought that such a class should not be supported and that it was far more important to take up the cause of agricultural labour. Not that the opposition was able to do very much even to ensure appropriate wages being paid to agricultural workers. Minimum wage legislation has remained largely ineffective, and leftist groups have not succeeded in organising agricultural labour except in a few small pockets. But that aside, the point is that the common peasantry has increasingly found that, in spite of the existence of democratic institutions in the country and their forming a substantive bloc in the population, their interests have not been effectively guarded.

It is because of this widespread disillusionment among peasants that support for leaders who specially claim to represent peasant interests has been increasing. This is so about Charan Singh in the North, Naidu in Tamil Nadu and Sharad Joshi in Maharashtra. The last case may be looked at in some detail. The most notable feature about Sharad Joshi is that he is a Brahmin, does not come from peasant stock, and has had a typical middle class background. Even as a civil servant, he worked in the Post Office, and had no district or revenue experience. But, apparently, as an international civil servant in Berne, he discovered that most international work meant to assist developing countries was in reality so much eye-wash. Disgusted, he left the job to return to India and devote himself to what he conceived to be the task of nation-building. He retired from the civil service and served a kind of apprenticeship in the agricultural business both by trying to organise a co-operative farm and by establishing himself directly in the farming business by buying and cultivating a piece of unirrigated agricultural land.

It is important to note this background because there are few middle class educated persons who have attempted to train themselves by getting involved in direct field work before they take up the task of organisation and leadership. In fact, few among the educated leaders even from predominantly

peasant castes like the Marathas have had first hand experience of farming.

The phenomenal rise of Sharad Joshi suggests that — consciously or otherwise — he carefully followed some important dictums regarding leadership. The acceptance of a period of apprenticeship to observe and to learn is one of them. The second was the single point solution he suggested which therefore carried an enormous appeal. 'We want no charity and we make no demands for assistance, support and subsidies', he declared. All that was necessary was justice in the form of proper prices for agricultural commodities, prices which would cover the cost of production including the labour put in by the farmer and his family. With the use of an array of statistics and homely examples, he was able to impress upon the peasantry that they were being cheated; that there was almost a deliberate policy of cheating them; and that their own leaders — elected by them — had become a party to this. His development of an effective imagery, of the exploited 'Bharat' consisting of the poor peasantry, and the urban non-agricultural 'India' which deceived and exploited the former, was a very effective propaganda slogan.

In the earlier years, his tactics were also such as to ensure quick success for the cause which he espoused. Agitations about prices for onions, sugarcane and tobacco were successfully organised and handled so that, both from the point of view of ensuring some benefit to the farmers and for creating an appropriate image for his leadership, they were successful.

His emphasis on keeping the movement non-political, and his scrupulously avoiding involvement in any political party or group even in a period of intense political rivalry, made his position even more appealing to the common peasant. So much so that opposition political parties, headed by Sharad Pawar, former Chief Minister and veteran Maharashtra leader, thought it necessary to organise a *Dandi-March* in support of the cause of agricultural prices. They thought that, by

doing so, they would ensure that the movement Sharad Joshi had organised would not remain non-political and would provide political support to the opposition. By not speaking against them but by keeping very ostentatiously aloof, Sharad Joshi was able to maintain his independent stance.

In the recent agitation about milk prices, his organisational inadequacies were exposed and his tactics were found to be a failure. But whatever happens to Sharad Joshi individually, there is no doubt that his movement has made obvious the importance of a leadership which would specifically sponsor the class interests of the largest single section of the rural population in the country. The failure of the national parties like the Congress, fully and carefully to represent the interests of this class, the dominance in that party of the urban-oriented and centralising tendencies and capitalist interests, makes it inevitable that new peasant oriented organisations will emerge in various regions and these will, whatever leaders like Sharad Joshi may say or intend, increasingly get involved in the political process.

The politicisation of the common peasant is thus rapidly increasing. It is also interesting to note that the *Sarya Seva Sangh* consisting of a number of Mahatma Gandhi's followers has thought it proper to support Sharad Joshi's movement. This is an indication of how a number of constructive workers of the old type — who still believe in old-fashioned norms of public life — and who also follow the Mahatma's special feeling of sympathy for the villagers, have come to the conclusion that this peasant revolt against government policies should be supported.

At the same time, the communication gap between the rulers (or rather the Ruler and her coterie) and policy advisors on the one side, and the common people in different parts of the country on the other, has been widening, and enough evidence is available about the utter unreality in which New Delhi increasingly functions. Manipulative politics, based on the exploitation

of one individual's charisma, and the use of a whole machine of ill-educated and self-seeking sycophants combined with a host of semi-criminal and goonda elements, can no longer provide for even a semblance of stable government. The wide gap between profession and practice is coming to be obvious even to the common peasant.

Moreover, there are an increasing number of educated and young members of peasant families, not all of whom can be accommodated in the ruling elite, who are providing the potential leadership for revolt. These are the people to whom Sharad Joshi's ideas and criticism appeal, and they are bound to have an increasing influence in the rural areas. Similar phenomena are discernible in other parts of the country, especially Punjab, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Andhra; and these will merge with other sources of dissatisfaction so as to create an increasing revolt against New Delhi as well as the Congress rule, and all that these stand for.

As somewhat parallel development is taking place in the urban areas, especially among industrial labour. This is the better educated, more conscious and better organised strata among the have-nots. The trade unions belonging to different political parties have been competing for their allegiance and support; and, in many cases, law and administration have been so used as to force on them the leadership of the INTUC, not only dominated by the Congress party, but usually also led by pro-capitalist and, many times, corrupt elements.

Workers have heard the talk of socialism, planning and workers' participation in management for a long time. At the same time, they have seen the reality of how, even in government-owned enterprises, politics and bureaucracy rule, there is little scope for vertical mobility, and how callous and unimaginative the higher management and direction usually is. The workers also see how the whole structure of personnel is one where the barriers between 'officers' and others remain high; and how even a potentially capable worker with less formal education

and perhaps inadequate knowledge of English finds his progress effectively blocked.

The workers also find that, while there is increasing affluence in the standards of living of those at the top of the business and even the political pyramid, inflation is permitted to eat into their own living standards. Control of monopolies is ineffective; but if the workers employed in monopoly enterprises demand and obtain a share, these are dubbed as 'high wage islands'. Government insists that there will be no full scale compensation for a rise in the cost of living index; and this in spite of the index showing a four fold increase between 1960 and 1980.

The manner in which government broke the railway strike in 1974 and took a tough anti-labour attitude during the Emergency; the support that many elements in the Janata Government gave to the Bhoothalingam Report regarding a national wage policy without doing anything effective regarding the real incomes of the richer groups; and the readiness shown by government to use all its might against workers in labour disputes such as in the largely abortive strike of public sector employees in Bangalore; all these have created increasing disillusionment among workers about the use of peaceful union activities and the securing of justice through responsible, ideologically oriented, old fashioned, trade union leaders.

The working of the industrial disputes machinery has been found wanting. Industrial relations' legislation is loaded in favour of trade union organisations supported by the ruling party, and the procedure for disposing of disputes is so complex and time consuming that workers are tired of it. Years pass before any matter can be decided. No wonder then that there has been preference shown by workers for unorthodox leadership which shows fighting qualities. There is no doubt that this was the reason for the earlier success of George Fernandes in the trade union world of Bombay. But then it was discovered that 'George the giant-killer' was using the trade union organisations as a

way of building up his political position. On entering Parliament, he was found to be less interested in devoting time and energy to the cause of his trade unions. When he was a Minister, though he proved his capability, he was hardly able to do anything to bring about a basic change either in the industrial structure or in labour legislation. No wonder that workers have shown increasing dissatisfaction with such leadership.

The rise of Dr. Datta Samant in the trade union field thus provides another significant example of the new atmosphere and the leadership which is coming up as a result. A medical practitioner by profession, Samant started as a social worker and got involved in conflicts with local vested interests when he was trying to assist hutment dwellers and quarry workers in some Bombay localities. This gradually brought him whole-time into trade union activities. Starting with small industrial units, many of them operating in engineering and such other comparatively sophisticated areas of industry, his tactics were found to be successful and workers gradually began to flock to him.

Following the adage — nothing succeeds like success — an increasing confidence in his tactics developed among the workers in the Thane-Belapur district, and his hold gradually spread to medium and large units. The employers increasingly became conscious of this new element in the trade union world; while some of them found it prudent quickly to give way, others began to warn their business colleagues and friends in government about the danger that Samant posed to industrial peace, to the other trade unions including the INTUC, and to industry in general. The biggest challenge which Samant has faced is of course in the Bombay textile strike which has gone on for over nine months and which has apparently been made a point of prestige both by business and by government to break this new type of leadership in the trade union world.

The special characteristics of Datta Samant are worthy of note. While he started as a Congressman;

it does not appear as if the party has had much influence on him and his trade union work. He appears to have had little to do with the leadership of the INTUC. The dislike in which he is held by the ruling party was indicated by the fact that he was almost the only Congress labour leader who was put under arrest in the Emergency. He has usually bothered little about legalities, and has agreed to lead workers even in units where there already exist other established trade unions which enjoy recognition both from the management and under the law. His approach appears to be that, in any case, there is no bar to workers taking to industrial actions against the advice of the existing union. Time and again, workers have done it and even then the union (usually one belonging to the INTUC) which has little effect on workers' action continues to be treated as 'representative' in law. This is so in the Bombay textile industry.

Samant's tactics are more of confrontation than of collective bargaining. It has been alleged that he makes little study of the detailed problems of the unit or the industry where he takes up the workers' leadership and initiates action. But, then, with manipulation of accounts having been developed by Indian management over many decades as a supreme art, can one criticise Samant for being sceptical and contemptuous of the published accounts?

Moreover, it is public knowledge that industrial units are made to pay large sums of money to politicians at different levels, and these amounts have rapidly escalated in the last decade. How do these funds arise if the accounts are properly maintained is the obvious question that anyone asks. Those who work in the administrative and accounting sections of industrial units are also well aware of the manner in which the finances of the units are misused; and accounts are fudged. At least some among them are sympathetic to Samant and supply him with relevant facts giving him some basis for the demands he puts forward.

The workers also apparently like his attitude of not getting involved in details but insisting on a large and

visible cash gain for them. Especially in the engineering, chemical and such other industries, the proportion of educated workers has increased; and they do not understand why, when managers can live in luxury and affluence, they are denied substantial increases in wages in the name of equity. Moreover, in some of these industries, the share of wages constitutes only a small proportion (10 to 15%) of the total production costs. Therefore, the units can well afford to accept even a substantial increase without much adverse consequence. That is the reason why many units have agreed to substantive wage increases.

Unlike most traditional and ideologically oriented trade unionists, Samant also does not appear to mind agreeing to a condition that, in return for an increase in wages, the workers should agree to higher productivity. One may doubt whether he has any means to ensure this; but perhaps his agreeing not to oppose measures to increase production is quite enough so far as the management is concerned. The main point is that, with constant inflation, the workers want substantial wage increases; and this is almost the single-point aim of Samant's battles.

Samant is accused of using strong arm tactics against rival unions and strike breakers. Can one say that any of the political parties, employers or even most unions have not used musclemen? Are not the police almost invariably used by employers and government generally against workers, and especially against trade unions belonging to the opposition? Samant — like other militant leaders before him — is blamed because apparently he pursues his goal in a single minded manner. But that is why workers appear to like him; and this is also why government, bureaucrats, political parties and even middle class intellectuals appear to dislike him; because he provides a kind of ultra-militant leadership for industrial workers which goes against the interests of all these classes.

One cannot say whether in taking up the leadership of the textile workers in Bombay and keeping them on strike for an unprecedent-

edly long period, Datta Samant has overreached himself. His doggedness in keeping workers on prolonged strikes has occasionally led to workers getting back to work under defeat, giving up his leadership, or arriving at an agreement which, on balance, does not appear to have been worthwhile. The government and millowners hope that this will happen in the Bombay textile strike. They are afraid that even a semblance of success for Samant in this strike would make him too powerful for their liking, and labour militancy would escalate.

On the other side, there is no doubt that Samant has picked up issues which appeal to a very large proportion of the textile workers; the impossibility of getting rid of the RMMS union which most workers do not seem to want; the maintenance of almost 40% of the workers employed in the industry on a temporary (*badi*) basis for a prolonged period; and the generally inferior position that the textile workers have been reduced to as compared to workers in newer industries. Most independent observers agree that the strike has continued not so much because of the fear of violence and intimidation as because of the genuine anger of a large number of workers at this state of affairs. In spite of this, especially when the government at the highest level appears to have decided to take a tough attitude, whether the strikers will have to accept a defeat is an open question.

One cannot also overlook the economic position of the textile industry. A number of millowners would be quite happy to close down the mills and realise the value of the real estate on which the mills are located. It is also a labour intensive industry, with a large proportion of mills with outdated machinery. It is not therefore impossible that Datta Samant may be defeated in this strike and that may well prove to be his Waterloo. This is what the government, the millowners, the business community generally and also many rival trade unionists and others are hoping for.

Whatever the individual fate of Sharad Joshi or Datta Samant,

what is undoubtedly true is that they represent a new type of leadership which is coming up and which is likely to set the pattern for the future. In this context, it is necessary not to overlook the fact — not always clearly realised — that Indira Gandhi herself set the pattern and provided the model for a new type of leadership. Her methods were unorthodox and amoral, and almost no holds were barred. There was a degree of ruthlessness which had not been common to Indian public life earlier. That is the reason why the old-fashioned leaders of the Syndicate — Nijalingappa, Kamraj, Atulya Ghosh and company, advised by Asoka Mehta, another old-fashioned socialist — were taken utterly by surprise and could be easily floored. Whether it was in the Presidential election, or in proving her majority in the Congress party, the old rules of the game were no longer considered valid.

These tendencies have gathered further strength in the last ten years and the new Congressmen brought together by her second son and put in positions of influence and power, have an approach to political and public life which is more like that of a mafia than like the traditional political party. Putting the interests of personal power — or dynastic power — above everything else, and permitting partisanship to succeed even at the cost of national interests has been Indira Gandhi's style of politics. *Dharma-Yuddha* is very nice to preach — to others — and after one has succeeded. The manner in which she, her second son and their followers behaved when they were in the opposition for a short time, and the way even the criminal actions of their followers have been connived at, are matters well known throughout the country.

Even recently, in the elections in Nagaland, Mrs. Gandhi's party was accused by the local regional Naga party of introducing corrupt practices and use of financial resources on a scale unknown before and impossible for a local party to compete with. To ensure a majority for the Congress (I) so as to enable it to form a government there, all

the independent members who were elected in opposition to that party but who subsequently joined it have been accommodated as ministers. The lessons of such utterly self-centred methods of political working are not lost on other aspirants for power. In a sense, Maneka Gandhi may be said to be a natural heir to all the self-centred, power-oriented and ideology-or-public-interest ignoring political ways of Indira Gandhi.

On the other hand, it is not as if new leaders like Sharad Joshi and Datta Samant are not coming up on the basis of the support of major political-economic forces. There are important class interests which aspire for single minded and capable leadership, and individuals who would ruthlessly pursue these interests are likely to succeed over others who falter. This is also the reason why, in spite of occasional misgivings about her personal dictatorial tendencies and even greater misgivings about the band which has collected around her, so many sections of the ruling elite — industrialists, bureaucrats, soldiers and others — are ready to support Indira Gandhi.

With a comparatively stagnant economy, growing demands for a share of the cake and greater politicisation, the nature of the political and economic battles is changing. The atmosphere is becoming more ruthless and harsh. Old fashioned fighters who take the rules of the democratic game seriously are increasingly found to be ineffective. The fate of the gentlemanly and correctly behaving socialist leaders like S.M. Joshi, N.G. Goray or Bagaram Tulpule, whether on the political or the trade union fronts, provides an object lesson for those who want to succeed.

Even the communists, mouthing radical slogans and Marxist warcries, with many of those at the top brought up in the old-fashioned atmosphere of the London School or Oxbridge, have been found not to be adequate in the situation as it is developing in India. That is why the younger revolutionaries increasingly turn to some form of *naxalism*

and spurn the established communist parties or their trade union and other wings. In Maharashtra, the communist parties have lost support except in a few odd rural pockets. Even in Bombay, their following is now less than that of even the *Shiv Sena*.

The socialists never had much support outside the cities; and, even there, their trade union support is gradually dwindling. The gainers are professional trade unionists like R.J. Mehta, or the new ones like Datta Samant. The Janata party is much respected but hardly counts. The BJP (as Jan Sangh) used to be treated as an urban Brahmin-supported group of little importance. But it appears to be gaining steadily, though how much is one of the unknowns at present.

It is interesting to compare the developments of new independent leaders like Sharad Joshi and Datta Samant with others in Maharashtra and elsewhere. Indira Gandhi has always preferred to give importance and support only to persons who have little or no grassroot support of their own, and who therefore are likely to be much more ready to accept her tutelage. The relationship — existing and potential — between the upcoming political leaders, and Sanjay Gandhi earlier and Rajiv Gandhi now, also apparently counts a great deal. It is probably necessary to make sure that the person to be supported by her is unlikely to become a competitor or even a regional rebel against either Indira Gandhi or her heir-apparent. That is probably the reason why she supported persons like R.K. Khadilkar, H.R. Gokhale, V.N. Gadgil and, more recently, Vasant Sathe, Shivaraj Patil, A.R. Antulay, S.B. Chavan and B.S. Bhosale.

The first six came from minority communities and castes, had little grassroots support and were unlikely to act except as politically appointed temporary civil servants. While the last two belong to the dominant Maratha caste, neither of them is known to have any significant political following. None of these persons, at least by the time

they began to receive Indira Gandhi's patronage and support, were known to represent any particular cause or ideology. But this also ensured that they were leaders merely by Indira Gandhi's courtesy and would become largely irrelevant without her support.

The case of A.R. Antulay graphically illustrates the very weak position of such leaders. Like his leader, A.R. Antulay also appears to be a person without any specific ideological commitment, or compunctions about the manner in which political and administrative affairs are to be conducted. Obtaining and effectively holding power is the aim for which all other considerations are to be subordinated. Nobody would ever have thought of Antulay as Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and he would have received hardly any support, if Sanjay Gandhi had not decided that he would be the best choice as a loyal instrument of the ruling coterie in New Delhi.

But, what happened was that, having been installed on the Bombay *gaddi*, Antulay showed his dynamism and capability by using the power attached to the Chief Ministership of the richest State in the country for building a secure base for himself. That in his hurry he ignored many administrative traditions, bypassed established conventions and used governmental powers arbitrarily for achieving his aims was nothing very exceptional. Indira Gandhi herself had been doing this for quite some time; and had also connived at such behaviour in her followers. Where perhaps Antulay transgressed the limit was in being so successful in building up a political power base for himself in so short a time that there was genuine fear that, at some stage, he might be in a position to challenge New Delhi.

Moreover, in the meanwhile, Sanjay Gandhi died and Rajiv Gandhi was now the heir-apparent. While Antulay like all other Indira Congress followers had speedily declared his allegiance to the newly rising son, there was no special understanding between him and Rajiv Gandhi as there had been bet-

ween him and Sanjay Gandhi. The opposition was able to mount an attack on Antulay's fund collections and, due to some carelessness on Antulay's part and the independent tradition of the Bombay High Court, the legal verdict went against Antulay. Even this would not have mattered; after all, many Congress ministers in the past have survived and been again put in important positions in spite of legal verdicts against them. But, because it was found that he had been able to build up support for himself which could possibly withstand a contrary indication by Indira Gandhi, the verdict was permitted to be used to dethrone him. The fact that his following has been rapidly dwindling in spite of his successor being a political nonentity indicates how brittle the base of such leaders is.

To understand the phenomenon of emerging leaders, it may be useful also to take note of the position of Sharad Pawar. He is a person whose rise to a leader-position could have been predicted on the basis of his qualifications which would almost satisfy specifications for leadership in Maharashtra. He is a Maratha by caste, and has a good power base in parts of the sugar belt. He is not only educated and intellectually active but also, like Y.B. Chavan earlier, has cultivated intellectuals and professionals of various types and thus earned their goodwill. He worked his way up in the Congress party, stayed with Y.B. Chavan as his follower and was treated by the latter almost as his heir-apparent. Like most recent Congressmen, he does not appear to be committed to any particular ideology, though he has a vaguely leftist stance.

His mastery at political tactics was shown by the way in which, seizing an opportune moment and sensing the change taking place in the country as a whole — and probably with indirect support from Y.B. Chavan — he overthrew the Congress Ministry in Maharashtra under Vasantdada Patil and organised a broad-based coalition government in tune with the Janata coalition at Delhi. He showed himself to be a capable administrator, earlier as a Minister and more specifi-

cally when he was Chief Minister. But his position became difficult with the fall of the Janata Government, especially with Indira Gandhi's return to power at the beginning of 1980. In spite of the efforts made on both sides, it appears that he has not been able to come to an equation with Indira Gandhi and her son.

What is far more significant is that, even when Y.B. Chavan and many of his followers as well as close friends of Sharad Pawar decided to make their peace with Indira Gandhi and return to her party, whatever the humiliation involved in the process, Sharad Pawar decided to maintain his independence. That he has now become the President of the rump of the old Congress party has little significance. The really important point is that he provides a potential centre around which a regional revolt against New Delhi, and even a Maratha revolt against Indira Gandhi, may gather support. There is already a great deal of dissatisfaction in Maharashtra in general and among the Maratha peasantry as well as political leadership in particular against the high handed manner in which New Delhi operates, and its failure to guard their economic as well as power interests. Sharad Pawar may well provide the focal point of this revolt when the situation is ripe.

The other ways in which a number of regional leaders are growing independently of Indira Gandhi should also be noted. The gradual ouster of the Congress party from Tamil Nadu since 1967, and how practically all national parties have lost their position in that State to the twin parties, AIADMK and DMK, is well known. It now appears obvious that, at least in the foreseeable future, Tamil Nadu will be controlled only by a regional leadership, one of whose strong stances will be an anti-Centre and especially an anti-Hindi approach.

The popularity of M.G. Ramachandran as an actor, based upon his benevolent-hero roles on the cinema screen, is providing a new dimension to the emerging pattern of leadership in the country. M.G.R. also has no ideology unless an anti-

Hindi stance can be treated as one. His approach seems one of taking some populist welfare measures (the school children's meal scheme is an excellent illustration of this) and, at the same time, doing nothing to upset the genuine interests of the Establishment. His government has proved to be pro-capitalist, pro-landlord and big peasant, and intent on maintaining power even at the cost of ruthless suppression of labour and peasant movements, intimidatory action against an independent press, and high-handed use of police forces. Apparently, his celluloid image is strong enough to overcome the reality of the functioning of his administration. His charisma in Tamil Nadu appears to be as effective as that of Indira Gandhi in the country as a whole.

One finds that this possibility is now going to be tried elsewhere too. There is already an attempt in Andhra to build up a regional party using yet another cinema actor, whose image has been built up in numerous films as the Lord Krishna, no less. He is attempting to organise a party vehemently regional in approach, and banking on an anti-New Delhi stance for gathering support. That this possibility has created much apprehension in the Indira Congress is enough indication of how superficial the support base of that group really is. Similar attempts may also be made elsewhere as in Karnataka. The Congress itself attempting to use the popularity of cinema actors for gathering new political support cannot be ruled out. The charisma of Indira Gandhi may be wearing thin; it may have to be supplemented by the charisma of 'screen' heroes like Amitabh Bachchan. This is in addition to the flagrant use of television to project the images of both Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

That mass democracy even in countries with educated populations can be swayed by irrational considerations is increasingly shown by the importance that image building, especially through the use of TV, has come to acquire in Europe and the USA. That the cinema screen images begin to have a similar effect in India is thus not surprising. The success of the new leaders also

shows that morality in terms of democratic norms or public funds does not appear to make much difference to the public — except when it affects large numbers or at least creates such apprehension as arbitrary and forced sterilisations did in the Emergency.

The popularity of some of the dacoits in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the people even eulogising them as *Baghis*, suggests how oppressed as well as ignorant many still are, and how they are looking for some effective leadership to get them out of their misery and deprivation. It is therefore to be expected that ruthless leaders who can create for themselves an image of fighting for the interests of particular sections or regions will receive increasing acceptance and support in many parts of the country.

Whether in this new world of tough and ruthless politics, the institutions of democracy which have been newly planted in India, and which have never really developed strong and deep roots, will survive is a moot question. As various interests begin to wage fierce battles for their rights — all these different classes, castes, languages, regions or religious groups — New Delhi will find it difficult to face such onslaughts. Practically no all-India party has realised and formulated an approach to the working of political institutions in India which would clearly take note of the complexity of this polity. With many language units, a number of them having populations larger than most independent European nations, and with no language group having a clear traditional superiority over others, the Indian union has genuinely to operate as a full scale federation. Ignoring this, we not only adopted a highly centralised Constitution, but even attempted to bypass whatever provisions for State autonomy were made, and attempted to control everything important from the Centre. To some extent, this was supported by many non-political leaders of public opinion on the assumption that this would help more rapid economic progress and social transformation. The assumption was questionable and, in any

case, it has not proved true in practice.

At the same time, such undue centralisation has adversely affected local initiative and enterprise, ignored local interests and helped a small minority of the population to obtain undue benefits from the economic development which has taken place. Moreover, in spite of the existence of a parliamentary democracy, the levers of political power have been so manipulated that various regional groups have found their genuine leadership side-tracked in favour of persons who can only be called agents of the central power. This was bound to be resented in a situation like India's, and the increasing disaffection in the North-East, Assam and now the Punjab is the inevitable result.

Similarly, the ruthless use by the leaders of business and industry, and the English educated high caste elite, of the advantages which they enjoyed for the ensured perpetuation of the existing unequal distribution of income and wealth has created increasing dissatisfaction. In spite of a plethora of legislation and administrative instruments, traditions of granting timely concessions and accommodating the interests of disaffected groups have not been developed. Solutions based on no principle but expediency, and the almost colonial contempt shown by the rulers at New Delhi for regional and other group interests in thinking that corrupting upcoming leaders can buy peace, have created much disillusionment.

There has hardly been any instance of the grievances of any major group, regional or economic, being understood and accommodated without large scale disturbances, many times erupting into violence. It is therefore increasingly felt by dissatisfied and disaffected groups, and these abound in different parts of the country and among different strata of the population — that unless they take to extra-Constitutional and even violent methods, their grievances and demands will receive no attention. The manner in which the peaceful agitation in Assam, with almost unanimous support from the Assamese, was ignored for

long provides a good example of this.

The inevitable result is that the new leaders are going to be not only impatient but also ready to take to nonparliamentary, agitational and even violent ways of pursuing their demands. In such a situation, it is going to be difficult to ensure that this will not lead to a destruction of the Indian polity, the stagnation of the economy and a long period of anarchy and chaos.

Whether there would still remain enough understanding among the newly emerging leaders to prevent a rapid destruction of the existing institutions, it is difficult to say. The only national leader who also is presently — though increasingly tenuously — in charge of the power structure has given no signs that she realises the magnitude and nature of the upcoming crisis, or that she is ready to change her ways and help develop a national consensus so that the emerging conflicts do not lead to mutual destruction and chaos.

The kind of leaders emerging today show a single minded devotion to the pursuit of the interests of their groups at the cost of damaging the society as a whole. After all, that is the basis of their success. Moreover, the manner in which practically all political leaders operate and live on the basis of illegally collected funds has created among the common people a disillusionment about most brands of politics. Almost all 'leaders' have got accustomed to spending both for personal and political purposes amounts far larger than they can legitimately account for. Corruption is therefore coming to be accepted as a normal part of life in the country. The enormous misuse of government machinery by political leaders in the ruling establishment is becoming more notorious even than the misuse of corporate assets by business executives. That Rajiv Gandhi without any official position can use IAF planes for his political work obviously provides an excellent example of the illegitimate use of government machinery and public property.

It is not clear whether the common people really resent this and

will support a genuinely non-corrupt alternative, or cynically accept such behaviour as normal, and follow the leaders' example to the extent they can. It is true that they have not been given many alternatives; but in the few cases in which leaders well known to be non-corrupt have put themselves forward as alternatives in elections, only a rare Madhu Dandavate has succeeded. Otherwise, at least in terms of voting behaviour, the common people have not indicated in the past any significant preference for non-corrupt political leaders. The comparative success of CPI(M) in West Bengal and Tripura, and of the BJP in a few pockets in the North, appear to be related to factors other than their comparatively clean image. It is therefore difficult to say whether an alternative leadership which insists on personal as well as political integrity would necessarily be preferred. Moreover, in the system of expensive electioneering as it has developed, such a group may find it difficult to obtain electoral success. If this trend continues, there does not seem to be any alternative to India's slow but sure movement towards increasing corruption in politics and administration at all levels, resulting in economic stagnation and political destabilisation.

Only if the older generation of leaders and the more influential groups show some degree of self-discipline, agree to the observance of a code of conduct, and adhere to the rules necessary for the functioning of a federal democratic polity; only if adequate initiative is left to the diverse regions in this vast country so as to ensure their self-governing growth; and only if the business, bureaucratic and educated urban elites understand that unless they give up the unduly large share of the cake which they are trying to grab, they cannot provide leadership for a peaceful transformation of the Indian economy, may it be possible for India to continue on the path of steady and peaceful progress. Otherwise, the new leaders are likely to lead the country to conflicts for which solutions cannot be found in a united, democratic and stable India.

The centre

ASHOK MITRA

IT is now thirty five years since Independence, and twenty two years since our written Constitution came into effect. This distance of time notwithstanding, an extraordinary situation now confronts us, and we have been reduced to the cliche of quoting, *ad nauseum*, from William Butler Yeats. The Centre, quite transparently, cannot hold. Divisiveness rents the air. Almost every day, there is news of fresh trouble and misunderstanding. The small States in the north-east are a smouldering cauldron, centrifugal forces are at work in Assam, Punjab is almost a gory battlefield. In several other States too, elements, intent on asserting their separate prerogatives, keep straining at the leash. This

raucous state of affairs currently defines our life and living. Even otherwise, there is a sombre sense of realisation that, despite the apparent progress in isolated directions, we remain one of the poorest nations on earth, and our rate of annual economic growth is also among the lowest.

An altogether new set of coordinates has been ushered in by the spreading influence of the so-called regional parties. What was initially considered to be a specific Tamil Nadu phenomenon has caught on elsewhere. There is resentment of being imposed upon by outsiders, which, after a while, gives way to a growing tide of unabashed sectarian-

ism. Each one is for himself or herself, each State is going to pursue its own particular interests. Just listen to the chief ministers on an issue such as the sharing of river waters between the different States; it is as if a group of foreign powers are exchanging polemics. The Centre has powers, enormous powers, but, in the given circumstances, such powers are of little avail; New Delhi, even after three years of sustained effort, has been unable to hold the elections in Assam.

Nothing could be more bizarre. The Centre holds all the cards. Given Article 356 of the Constitution, it can get rid of any State government that proves inconvenient; all that is called for is the satisfaction of the President that such a step is necessary. Shrimati Gandhi having arranged during the Emergency to amend Article 74 of the Constitution in an appropriate manner, the satisfaction of the President is now only a polite piece of fiction, and is coterminous with the satisfaction of the Central Council of Ministers. Even in matters legislative, the supposed division of responsibilities worked out in Article 246 and the Seventh Schedule, with the three-fold innovation of the Union List, the State List and the Concurrent List, has not at all affected the Centre's pervasive role. In the stretch covered by the Concurrent List, it is the Centre's wishes which, even in the formal sense, are supposed to prevail ultimately. The insertion of Article 31A, 31B and 31C in the Constitution has further ensured that, where property rights are involved, the Centre retains the legal power to veto the States.

Several Constitutional Amendments, pushed through over the years, have nibbled at many other prerogatives of the States enunciated in the original version of the Constitution, such as their power to levy sales tax in terms of Entry 54 of the State List of the Seventh Schedule. The Centre's financial powers, already extensive, have thus been further enlarged. Three-quarters of the aggregate tax revenues collected in the country now go to the Centre. Nearly 85 per cent of the receipts from public borrowings are retained by the Centre.

The Centre can create money through the modality of deficit financing, a privilege denied to the States. Even the Finance Commission, set up every five years and assigned by the Constitution the task of ensuring that a part of the proceeds from income tax and basic excise duties goes to the States, is being packed with the Centre's men: the President is supposed to constitute the Commission, but, once more, Article 74 intervenes; he has to act on the advice of the Council of Ministers. Finally, the nation's banking system — responsible for advancing more than Rs. 30,000 crores as loans — is also completely at the disposal of the Government at the Centre.

All these powers, legislative, administrative and financial, are now running the risk of proving counter-productive. Such enormous concentration of clout, instead of improving the quality of performance in different spheres, is leading to diseconomies and non-performance. This is an area where failure is self-promoting. A lowering of efficiency means a lesser order of output from out of a given bundle of resources. Such a fall in productivity reduces the availability of resources for future growth, and this is true for every successive round.

Why do the diseconomies emerge? To ferret out the answer, we have to go to the roots of our polity. All the while, we talk of the national tradition and of the national heritage. Certainly, there is that commonality of feeling and emotions which integrates into the national consciousness. Up to a point, there is also the affection for, and allegiance to, a common corpus of classics, of mythology and music, of literature and architecture, and so on. It would however be straining credibility to claim that, qualitatively, this commonality of the Indian tradition and of our national consciousness is of a deeper genre than what is supposedly represented by, say, the European tradition. The European tradition is a *collage*; the composition is enriched by contributions from citizens who belong to different nation-States, but who have, through the centuries, retained their separate polities.

In India, we have embarked on an even more ambitious experiment. The national consciousness which is India subsumes a sub-set of several individual consciousnesses. A citizen of India is at the same time a Tamil, or a Punjabi, or a Gujarati, or a Malayalee, or a Bengali, or an Oriya, or a Naga. It is, in its very essence, a symphonic arrangement: the subsidiary personalities have each a dignity of their own; the symphony cannot grow by subtracting the individual resonances.

The commonality of one integrated polity is a fact; nonetheless tribute need be paid to the distinctiveness of the subsidiary *personae*, who provide the scaffolding of the polity. It is an enormously more difficult challenge than the Europeans have ever faced; for them, the individual nation-States have remained as sovereign entities; all that has happened from time to time is a modulation of the contours. It is neither sedition nor sacrilege to point out that our model, which excludes the concept of such sub-sets of sovereign entities, has a unique delicacy. Few historical parallels here exist to go by. The imperial models, including the one the British experimented with in the nineteenth century, were in the nature of impositions.

These forced experiments have invariably come apart. Besides, the spatial and emotional spread which the Republic of India represents puts into shade all approximately close parallels from the past. We are grappling with not just the fact of enormous disparities in the levels of awareness as well as in the levels of social and economic development; the linguistic, cultural and religious divides are of an acute order, as are the heterogeneities in ethnic stocks and societal attitudes and behaviour. And there is the other, rather obvious but not-to-be-slighted, factor of sheer physical distance between peripheral units and the political centre.

In this milieu, it is easy to hurt, easy to create misunderstanding, easy to be unjust to x, y or z even when the intention is altogether otherwise. The very first Article of our Constitution proclaims that we

are a Union of States. Few take this declaration seriously any more, but it is perhaps the most crucial ascription with which the Constitution has adorned the Republic of India. The Union of India is a coming together of States. Once the imperial sanction was withdrawn, this coming together had to be of a voluntary nature: the Union was a concordat to which each constituent — that is to say, each State — signified its consent.

The metaphysics of this concordat may appear as altogether corny to some observers, but it provides the only *rationale* of the Indian polity as it has emerged. Remove that metaphysics, and we are left with only the sanction of brute physical power. And the overwhelming concentration of financial powers in the hands of the Centre, with the corresponding helplessness of the State governments to redress, on their own, the felt needs of the people, throws a given light on the metaphysics.

Why is it, it may be legitimately asked, that issues such as this are rearing their heads now, thirty five years after independence, why is it that, at least during the first fifteen or twenty years following the withdrawal of the British, no substantive analysis or discussion over them ever took place? A partial answer to the conundrum is provided by the structural history of the Congress party. It was a loose-limbed organisation, but it was a federal organisation *par excellence*; a mutuality of trust and respect existed between the party's central leadership and those who led and organised the party in the outlying States.

With Jawaharlal Nehru around, there was no doubt a certain aura of paternalism in this relationship. However, the paternalism was bereft of hauteur; few complaints were heard that the Centre was imposing its decisions on the States. Reflective of this relationship on the party plane was the impeccably democratic exchanges between the Prime Minister at the Centre and the State Chief Ministers — such as a Govind Ballabh Pant, a B.C. Roy, even an E.M.S. Namboodiripad —

at meetings of the National Development Council.

The fabric of that reality was torn asunder first by the removal of the duly elected Communist government in Kerala in 1959, and subsequently by the *coup* Indira Gandhi effected within the Congress party in 1969. To take the latter point first. The Congress continues to reign at the Centre and in most of the States. It is however no longer a federal party. It has now a rigidly centralised structure. The State units have ceased to matter; they have ceased to matter even as channels of information. There is also the aspect of the learning curve. The government represents the instrumentalities of power.

A number of things have happened over the years. The government's — more specifically, the Central government's — powers have grown. In 1947, the government in New Delhi was spending the equivalent of only about 5 per cent of national income; today, it spends more than 20 per cent. Those controlling the government have become increasingly aware of the enormous consequence of their coming to wield ever-expanding power. The learning curve has been at work at the level of the States too: expectations from the government have kept rising, and these have included expectations about the nature of deference to be shown to the *persona* of individual States by the Centre.

At the same time, awareness grew, particularly following the dismissal of the first Communist government in Kerala, that the Centre was not a neutral entity. It represented specific interests — class interests — and would interfere in the activities of a State government whenever it felt its own interests threatened by the latter. With the Congress party gradually losing its federal character, it so emerged that those wishing to articulate the sentiments of the States were left with two alternatives: (a) to ingratiate themselves with the Centre and thereby influence its policies and actions, and (b) to raise the banner of revolt against New Delhi, which some-

times proved to be quite an efficient way of drawing attention to one's needs and problems.

Both alternatives however have serious drawbacks. The practice of sycophancy is not only degrading in itself; it encourages the scope for irrational decisions and feeds the imperial ego of those in control at the Centre. In so far as this is responsible for the proliferation of irrational behaviour, the economic and social cost involved is enormous. If, instead of sycophancy, it is dissidence which marks the behaviour of the representations of the States, there is again a deviation from the economic optimum.

The suppression of dissidence, given the specifics of the modalities generally used, leads to greater alienation of the people; the outlay on the instruments of suppression results in a lowering of the availability of resources for development. Either way, the consequences are a derailment of national priorities and a gross maldistribution of resources, thus both lowering the rate of economic growth and aggravating the regional imbalances.

In the more recent years, the picture has been further complicated by an extraneous development: the predilection, increasingly overt, of the present Prime Minister to enshrine the dynastic principle of succession. Some of the recent excesses of centralisation can be directly linked to the eagerness to underwrite the smooth succession of the Prime Minister's son: since the party structure has become defunct, the temptation has grown to put to use the huge powers at the disposal of the Centre to enhance the national acceptability of the offspring.

Viewed against this background, the sudden death of Lal Bahadur Shastri in January 1966 was particularly unfortunate. If only Shastri had stayed on as Prime Minister for, let us say, two terms, the political landscape would have been transformed beyond description. A gap of ten years between Jawaharlal Nehru's passing and Lal Bahadur Shastri's withdrawal from the scene

would have rendered Indira Gandhi's succession less axiomatic, and notions of automatic dynastic succession would have been effectively dispelled.

It is a vulnerable situation. The Centre is the repository of enormous powers. But the survival of the polity depends on the ability of those in authority to resist the temptation to use these powers to an extent where the States begin to feel hemmed in. The concentration of these powers in the hands of the Centre is the result of a concordat. It was implicit in that concordat that certain boundary conditions would not be infringed. It is as part of that understanding that English continues as the major official language of the country, and that the telecast of Hindi news via the national hook-up is dispensed with in the case of television centres located in the South. Article 370 of the Constitution represents another facet of the same concordat.

The Centre will be in breach of that concordat if it treats the north-eastern States as outposts of an imperial grandeur or, at the first sign of resistance to such attempts, thinks of a military solution. It will be in breach of that concordat if it wants to stall the land reforms legislations proposed in West Bengal simply because they go against its own class interests, and uses the crude device of Article 31A of the Constitution for that purpose. It will be in breach of that concordat, if, led astray by the enormous resources at its disposal, it decides to impose its own economic priorities on the entire nation and further insists on centralising the supervision and monitoring of economic activities: that could only reduce the overall pace of progress for the nation. It will be in breach of that concordat if, while allocating grants under Article 282 of the Constitution, it discriminates between the States, rewarding some, penalising some others, for altogether sectarian reasons. It will be in breach of the concordat if it uses Article 356 to dispense with State governments whose political or ideological colour is different from its own. It will also be in breach of that concordat if

the instrumentalities available to it are glaringly deployed to promote narrow household interests.

The temptation of power is however a great corrupter of civilisation. Once the powers are there, as the past decade has shown, the inclination is to make use of them, so as to get rid of dissidence, or to advance the interests of such groups of politicians as are proximate to the authorities and, therefore, by inference, against those who are not so, or to thwart a State bill likely to affect adversely the interests of class forces aligned with those in control at the Centre, or simply to accumulate even more power. There could however be no worse folly than to repeat the manœuvres of the 1970s. Each and all have proceeded along the learning curve; each and all are increasingly aware of their rights and prerogatives; each and all are familiar with the concept of natural justice.

Attempts on the part of the Centre to cut corners could therefore lead to consequences imperilling the polity itself. But while the powers are there, the temptation too will be there. If the concordat which is the Union of India is to be saved from such misadventures, the obvious course is to initiate juridical steps which would see to it that the Centre is not the depository of such all-embracing powers. A devolution of powers and resources, besides, could stimulate economic growth irrespective of whether other structural adjustments do or do not take place; it could moderate the pangs of regional disparities and extricate the Centre from the cultivation of authoritarian hauteur.

The little progress made during the Janata interregnum of 1977-79 towards the attainment of this objective has been rudely halted since Shrimati Gandhi's return to power. It would be a tragedy if the ambition — as well as the mode and manners — of her and her family were to be instrumental for the disintegration of the polity. Recent developments around her carry one overriding message: nothing is more enfeebling than the accumulation of excessive power.

New wave of violence

K. F. RUSTAMJI

THE crisis of 1982 all over the world is not only that of banks, bankruptcy, unemployment, inflation and recession. It is not even that of nuclear freeze. The real crisis is of leadership in that nobody knows what to do to get out of the stagnation and decline that has set in. All over there is apprehension that social values will be affected, fanatics and punks will proliferate, terrorism may become uncontrollable, peace may be seriously disturbed.

A new wave of violence is coming. Even the older democracies may be shaken up roughly by the spectre of dictatorship.

The world as we knew it in 1980 is finished. West Germany — that economic giant — has a financial situation which has been described as desolate. The solid State of France and several European countries are in an economic mess. More than half the world is bankrupt. Unemployment in the USA has reached the highest figure in forty years. Prime Ministers fall like the dry leaves of summer.

The super powers seem to be acting out a black comedy situation in which each agonises over the inferiority of his arms build-up, and

promises to work hard to cover up his naked weakness. Perhaps the two policemen — Andropov and Bush — will realise the need for a world law and a police force to enforce it.

'There is turmoil under the heavens,' is the Chinese view — 'but the situation is excellent.' A rapprochement with the Russians may be possible,' say the Dengists, 'which will make the global balance look like the statue of justice with only one pan.'

The elections of October-November 82 in the USA (300 million dollars spent; and money often the biggest loser) showed clearly the unfinished search for answers. First, it was an arms build-up that was needed. Then the voters said: 'Maybe all that was said before was wrong. Jobs are needed more than anything else.'

Voters have rushed this way and that — unsure, unable to make up their minds: wanting a change at any cost, but not knowing how to change.

Gradually the world has sunk into debt and unemployment — despair and misery abound — and all the pettiness, the vices and the

factionalism of the ghetto have begun to spread and dominate the whole scene.

In the past, we pulled out of such difficult periods, called depression, recession, post-war and the like, with a certain confidence and predictability. The strategies of the financial wizards seemed to work. This time the wizards themselves have been unmasks. They have no wizardry.

In such a situation, where the wise have no firm convictions, it is the unthinking that have assumed leadership and taken it upon themselves to shape events. And the most unthinking are the religious fanatics, who have appeared all over the world, with cries of fundamentalism and revival of faith. They want to take a sharp U-turn in the way of life which science and human rights have led us to believe was the right way. The revival of faith, which began in a mild way in Christian countries, has worked its blood-drenched way through Islamic countries, and has now arrived in India.

What could be worse than the Akali Sikh agitation in the Punjab, organized by one group, in a community that has done well—perhaps the best—since Independence? The Sikhs have spread out all over India and in many parts of the world, gained respect for hard work and persistence, manned the armed services with distinction, agriculturally built up Punjab, and shaped events in their home State in a way that made one say with conviction that Punjab was the leading province of India. And, then, when they were well set on the road to prosperity, voices from the past began to nag and rouse them into a campaign of terrorism and civil disobedience. What is it meant to achieve? Power? Unlimited power? In the minds of rural groups there are dreams that the Sikhs will rule again as a religious power.

'Raj Karega Khalsa', four women shouted in piping voices outside the Indian Embassy in Washington. The work of the Embassy was almost suspended for the day.

One wrong lesson that partition seems to have taught every politician in India is that if you can work up disorder, produce the type of hysteria which makes blood flow on the streets, torment the people with *bandhs* and *morchas* and foodless days, government will compromise, and the organizers will become national leaders. The government will not only come to terms, they will accept, forgive, propitiate and even feel guilty if someone says that they do not accept the compromise whole-heartedly.

The only difference between 1947 and 1982 is that today there is no third party like the British. If a third party is not available locally, one can be found abroad and, if it is difficult to find one, hopes can be raised that at the right time it will appear. The Khalistan issue emerges in this context as the bait for foreign interference and the hope for local support.

Darbara Singh's valiant effort to stem the tide of communalism is not well known in the country. It has not received the support it deserved. The majority of us in India have looked on supinely while a brave Sikh stood up to fight the fever that has seized some of his people. If he fails, the relations between the two communities may break down as easily as they broke down in the year 1946 in the Punjab between Muslims on the one side and the Sikhs and Hindus on the other.

The undivided State of Punjab was the show-piece of communal amity. The healthy, hefty land of valiant men and beautiful women, suddenly crumbled in an unexpected burst of slaughter and unbridled violence. Let us not make the mistake of saying that the holocaust of 1947 can never be repeated. The signs are there for all to see. The political murders, the language and tactics of the Muslim League, the gun toting motor cyclists who have killed again and again, the grenade attack on Darbara Singh from which he escaped miraculously, the appeal of extremism. Worst of all, there is growing suspicion in the minds of the well-to-do Hindu, who has the option to move out, that it would be best to have a second home in Delhi or Bombay.

Can we as a nation look on listlessly when the peace of a vital State is disturbed by a group of religious fanatics trying to destroy all that the Constitution has given to us, and all that we have built up as a democratic tradition?

Jinnah could not have wanted a holocaust—but could he stop it? Those who start such movements live under the delusion that there will be no bloodshed if they are there.

Can we allow the Hindus to be intimidated in the Punjab—without expecting that all over the country there will be adverse reactions which will make the protection of Sikhs extremely difficult?

Can we allow even one Hindu to leave his home in the Punjab due to fear, harassment by his trade rivals, and be unprepared for the massive attempt to break open and capture the successful businesses, farms and homes of Sikhs all over the country?

Can we ensure that as a counterblast to Akali communalism, there will not be a Hindu revivalist movement—which will grow with powerful intensity and throw us back into the dark ages?

Can we compromise with communalism in the Punjab, and hope that a similar agitation will not arise in caste-ridden Bihar, or in tribal areas where food shortage due to drought will create tensions, or all over the country over the Harijan issue?

We know from experience that the vicious poison of communal frenzy is compounded from ingredients which are served up in every street by fanatical orations and partisan newspapers. It is more deadly than cyanide. It arises spontaneously in a country troubled by overpopulation and want. It spreads on the winds of rumour; and it can reduce sensible, courageous, compassionate men to the level of cowards lustng for human blood.

The worst feature of it is that we do not go by the views of men of intellectual worth. We make leaders,

by our habits of negotiation and compromise, of zealots who are the enemies of the Republic, because we are afraid of their threats of violence, and we feel that they may not vote for us.

"After each bout of bloodshed we look upward like Jesus on the Cross, and say: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Let us try another way this time. 'Father, you may do what you think best, but make us step in and firmly crush anyone who wants to spread the poison of communalism, in this land prone to communalism. Do not forgive us if we fail.'

Although so much damage has been caused to the country by the misuse of all the liberties that we have, there have been few studies on the subject of agitation and rioting and the resultant violence generated. In a country where it is easy to work up frenzy, and where we have seen the devastating effects of it — the worst being Partition — one would expect that the people would be as wary of it as of nuclear bombs. But the fact is that we have ceased to be wary of the dangers that are real. We can think of only one danger — invasion. All others, which may sap our energies a hundred times more than war, are neglected. Often the dangers are never even noticed till it is too late.

Whether it is a Muslim or Hindu or Sikh or caste agitation, or one that arises out of the cow slaughter problem, or the Irish problem, a stage is reached when the original demands hardly matter. The violence of the police, the violence of opposing groups, the blood and vengeance that is the result of hysteria, the thrill of carrying guns, and the equally heady thrill of conspiracy, these act as self-generating factors of the cycle of violence. And a vested interest develops in its continuation because of the funds, the collections, and the employment it provides to muscle men.

Thus, you reach a stage when there is no way in which violence can be stopped. You may have a hundred conferences, a hundred meetings, endless discussion, but there is a vested interest created in

violence; which is political only in one part, the other three parts being revenge, dispossession and humiliation to the other side. Only the murder of a Mahatma, or the repeated shocks of police or army violence can bring the offenders back to sanity.

The worst damage is to the minds of normal well-meaning men and women. How many Muslims whom I knew in 1946 to be thoroughly straight and friendly began to talk in a manner which was totally incomprehensible. Today, several of my Sikh friends talk in the same way; and I am alarmed. Whatever the outcome of the negotiations, even if there is a temporary withdrawal of the agitation, the fact that we must now live with is that the poison has spread rapidly, and has gone deep into elements in most communities.

Today each of us has a duty which he is not willing to perform. To that extent, each of us is a poor specimen of our democracy. Each of us wants that the government should save us, should deal with problems with limited police resources and their preoccupations with party strife, and the inadequate brains which they command. Each of us is not prepared to speak out that laws must be strengthened, forces strengthened, the impartiality of all forces worked up to the last limit, the courts of the judiciary made prompt and rigid, and punishment made a deterrent. If nothing works, call out the army or impose martial law, or create special tribunals. Most of all we need the pressure of democratic public opinion. The press, the legislature, the university, the village chauk, have all to combine to say: 'Stop this nonsense,' and that includes negotiations, which strengthen the movement.

There is a tendency in this country, however, which we must guard against. Whenever a situation is difficult, we do not strengthen the law. We do not develop democratic pressure in the right way. We are afraid of passing a harsh law, even if it is meant to stop a massacre. We want the police to exercise powers without restraint, even to

the extent of killing suspects. If we do it in the wrong way, we will repeat what happened in Latin America. 90,000 citizens have disappeared in the last decade. 'You look everywhere,' said a Professor, whose daughter disappeared in Argentina in 1977. 'You go to the police, to the prisons, to the morgues. Everywhere they claim that they have never heard of her.'

A new wave of violence must be expected and we must prepare for it. Not only dacoity, robbery and senseless communal carnage, there will be organised violence by youth groups. The youth feel that they do not belong — have no role, no place in the home, in the street. They are thinking on new lines. They want the State to go easy on armaments, to respond to their urge for jobs; and nothing will improve they think till they fight the powers that be and their symbol — the police.

Communalism in UP has appeared again and again. Every time we wonder why the State should succumb so easily and so repeatedly, in one town or the other, to looting and killing. It suggests that we have not found out the causes, and have come to accept communal rioting as something that is rooted in the State's politics and poverty.

Rioting has been set in a pattern which indicates powerful revivalist trends on both sides, Hindu and Muslim, and an unreliable administrative apparatus, which is unable to see the serious damage that it is causing us.

I have watched with dismay during the year 1982 the conversion of the Uttar Pradesh PAC (Provincial Armed Constabulary) from the model force that I worked with in the fifties to a unit which is feted by the Hindus and hated by the Muslims in the towns of UP. It is praised by some Hindu parties and criticised by all who have studied the communal situation in the State.

Since the so-called mutiny in the PAC, which inflicted a wound in the force under the guise of discipline, the PAC has been looking for friends—and how easy it is to find them in the Hindus of the riot-affec-

ted cities — Moradabad, Aligarh, Allahabad and Meerut.

The process of making friends is very easy. When panic grips a city and rumours predict an impending attack by the Muslims, you can give assurances to the Hindus that an attempt on them by the Muslims will not be allowed to occur under any circumstances. The force is then given accommodation — cups of tea and sweets are doled out by prosperous merchants who want their shops to be saved from looting. The PAC lad is hailed as a protector, a saviour from Muslim atrocities, and he feels that he will die rather than let down such firm compatriots — such generous hosts.

On the Muslim side, the open fraternisation of the PAC with the Hindus—the garlanding, the press praise, the serving of food, and the vicious propaganda from their own communal leaders — give the Muslim masses the feeling that the PAC is an enemy to contend with. So, when the PAC is sent anywhere in a Muslim *mohalla*, the stage is set for a confrontation.

Weakly officered, or not officered at all, moved by false rumours, and in a state of panic because of improper briefing and faulty leadership, a section or platoon of the PAC comes upon a scene that can create distrust and fear in the stoutest hearts. Lighted 'mashals', belligerent-looking groups of Muslims clustering together (out of fear), shouts of Allah-o-Akbar resounding through the night like battle cries (more to banish fear than to fight battles) — and perhaps a stone or two thrown by frightened youngsters, and triggers are suddenly pulled. Nobody has given the order, nobody acknowledges that firing has occurred. A boy drops dead; the rest disappear. There is total silence. From behind closed doors people peep to find out whose son has been killed.

The PAC force returns to the Hindu *mohalla* to be greeted with cheers because it is assumed that it has saved the Hindus from a serious attack, probably engineered by Pakistan through foreign agents in Delhi.

Police records are then cooked up. A spate of false entries, false reports, false injuries, are recorded.

The firing and the casualties are used by Muslim extremists to create a desperate situation. Bombs, guns, crackers are brought out from secret places. Word goes round that the authorities in Lucknow have issued orders to finish the Muslims of the town, to rape their women, to burn their factories. Some sections of the Urdu press add their own fuel to the fire. 'Protect yourself. Put a 'kafan' on your head and be prepared to meet your end like a soldier of Islam.'

The next time the PAC goes to the scene of an incident in a Muslim locality, crackers and bombs are thrown. A rifle spits fire, and this time there is much firing, much shooting in utter panic to quell what the ranks in the PAC unit are convinced is the conspiracy so often talked about in Hindu areas, so often mentioned even by partisan officers.

Intelligence now has a field day — a Muslim revolt — a foreign hand — foreign money — Imam of Delhi — a conspiracy to destabilise the State — to weaken the nation.

Why is it that the people of this land cannot see through the hasty, panicky actions of small men? Why is it that we undertake to lie till we are blue in the face after each riot when the facts are there as clear as daylight for any responsible person to see? Why is it that in the same *mohallas* where there is serious tension not a stone is thrown, not a slogan raised against the CRP or the BSF, and the Army is welcomed with such relief that it ought to shame every policeman in India?

Communalism is the greatest danger that we face in this year of drought and international misbehaviour. If we compromise with fanatic religious groups in any way, we will open the gates to a flood of Hindu revivalism and violence which will sweep away all the signposts of civilised life like a flood in the Brahmaputra river.

Between hothouse and cold shower

MRINAL DATTA CHAUDHURI

A character in a Mary McCarthy novel spent years of his youth in various self-indulgent pursuits to find out his true preferences, with the secure knowledge that the girl next door was pining away in unrequited love for him. One day in a state of depression, which the pursuit of freedom has a tendency to lead to, he looked towards her and saw that the girl meanwhile had bloomed into a great beauty and was pursued by many men. He instantly fell for her and declared his love. The girl looked sadly at him and said. 'We seem to be out of phase with each other.'

Something analogous happened in the relationship between the Indian economy and the rest of the world during the last quarter century. In the mid-50s, India judged that it was almost impossible substantially to increase its foreign exchange earnings by pushing exportable commodities to the world market. But rapid industrial growth required plant, equipment and various producers' goods, for which the domestic economy did not have production facilities. Therefore, it was judged that the best way to

launch a rapid industrialisation programme was to forget about the possibilities of trade with the rest of the world and to embark on the difficult and costly process of making everything at home, behind a protective wall. If India were a small country, such a choice would have been patently absurd. But it was felt that India was a country of continental size, almost a world unto itself, and therefore it could sustain a balanced industrial development in a self-sufficient, autarchic manner.

Well, in the course of the next two decades, India did manage to create a more-or-less self-sufficient, nearly autarchic economy. But the economy remained slow-growing, almost stagnant, so that it could not provide gainful employment for the growing labour force. Nor could it raise the living standards of its people perceptibly.

But, during those two decades, the environment of world trade changed dramatically. The mature industrial economies of North America, West Europe and Japan experienced rates of growth, the

likes of which had never been experienced in their earlier histories. This growth process made demands for newer resources, and the high-wage workers of these countries had to give up many production lines to be taken up by the low-wage work-force of the less industrialised countries.

The major beneficiaries of this process were members of the less developed countries of East Asia and Latin America. These countries took advantage of the fast-developing opportunities created by this international division of labour and grew at phenomenal rates. Thus, from the ranks of the poor underdeveloped economies emerged a group of newly-industrialised countries. South Korea, Taiwan, Hong-Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Mexico, Brazil, etc. These countries were able to offer their people in the mid-70s an average standard of living which most countries of West Europe were unable to give their citizens in the early 50s.

Faced with her own stagnant industrial economy and with the glittering examples of the newly-industrialised countries, India is now trying to shift gears. She is trying to pull down her protective wall and to liberalise her trade regime. But the booming growth process of the mature industrial economies has come to a complete halt. All the predictions seem to indicate that it is unlikely to regain its lost momentum again in the near future. At this stage, by liberalizing her trade regime, India is hurting her domestic industries, which have grown used to the protective wall around the home market and have never had the incentive to learn to fight for external markets. Moreover, fighting for external markets is now so much more difficult.

The inevitable questions one would ask of Mary McCarthy's hero can also be asked of the Indian economy. How far was India justified in making that particular strategic choice in the 50s? Is it always true that this choice inevitably leads to near-stagnation? If it need not always be true, what combination of circumstances led to this outcome? Now that the lost opportunities

cannot be regained, what is the best course of action in the altered situation?

Predictions about the future of world trade are always hazardous. On the basis of past performance and whatever indicators were available at that time, Raul Prebisch, an influential Latin American economist, declared in the early 50s that the underdeveloped countries could not expand their export earnings substantially. The late Professor Mahalanobis and others responsible for India's planning efforts at that time accepted this verdict. Of course, with hindsight it proved to be wrong; but from the vantage point of the mid-50s it was an eminently maintainable position.

Export-pessimism either could generate a passive submission to the prospects of a slow pace of industrial progress, or could lead to a bold resolve to look beyond one's immediate future and initiate an industrial revolution within one's own means. Evidently, India opted for the latter course. In purely psychological terms, it was certainly admirable. But it is not clear that those who made the choice were even fully aware of all the implications which that choice entailed. It is doubtful that responsible people with full awareness of all that it would involve would have had the courage and the confidence that they could carry these measures through.

India's strategic choice in the mid-50s required commitments on three fundamental issues. In the short- and the medium-run the State would have to divert increasing shares of peoples' income into capital formation. In the longer run, an economic structure had to be created, in which all round expansion of purchasing powers would create the domestic market for the products of new industries. And, lastly, if the protective wall were to eliminate foreign competition, which has been the principal method of enforcing efficiency for the home industries in most countries, a new mechanism had to be devised to make the domestic industries cost- and quality-conscious. We now know that on all these three fronts, India failed rather badly.

The Indian State did not ever go all out for mobilising domestic resources. The building up of the public sector in the early phase was essentially financed by foreign aid and by the purchasing power made available to the State through the U.S. PL-480 food imports. When the climate of foreign aid worsened the public sector also lost its growth momentum. In fact, today we have come to a situation where, even though the idle domestic industries could easily supply certain capital equipments, the Indian State sometimes finds it easier to import these items from abroad, simply because it is easier to finance imported capital goods by foreign borrowings, whereas the domestic goods would have to be financed by mobilising domestic resources.

A number of domestic industries today are operating at less than full capacity because the home market cannot sustain them. Iron and steel, engineering goods and textiles are the major examples of industries suffering from insufficient demand. The pattern of development which the country has experienced during the last quarter century has put high pressure on the markets for urban real estate, bullion and precious stones, old carpets and antiques, building materials and passenger cars, but has created depressed conditions in the markets for industrial plant and equipment as well as for ordinary consumption goods like textiles, electric bulbs or kerosene lanterns. In fact, the per capita consumption of cotton textiles in the country has hardly gone up during the last two decades, although per capita income has registered a moderate increase during the same period. This is a predictable outcome for an autarchic underdeveloped economy in which public investment is declining in real terms and purchasing power is growing mainly around the narrow base of the affluent sections of the population.

Today, the industrial economy of India can neither generate surplus for its own expansion nor achieve better capacity utilization by pushing its products to the external markets. This is largely because of the

wasteful and lethargic ways in which it operates. In a market economy, it is the threat of bankruptcy, if not the attraction of the high rewards for successful competitors, which keeps the producers alert and non-wasteful. In this country, the protective wall kept foreign competitors away, while the licensing rules and other regulatory devices put limitations on the possibilities of domestic competition. Therefore, the traditional methods of disciplining the producers into trying to reduce their costs and to maintain if not improve the quality of their products could not take effect.

The management structure of the growing public sector was fragmented among different layers of the governmental bureaucracy. Here, not only is it not possible for the fear of bankruptcy to raise its ugly head, but even the dishonour of wrist-slapping cannot frighten anybody, because there are too many wrists involved in the fortunes of an enterprise. One does not have to believe the words of the propagandists for free enterprise that theirs is the only system which ensures production efficiency; but in that case one has to find a reasonably workable alternative to it.

Unfortunately, the Indian economy did not find such an alternative. Hence, the fragmented management of the public sector and the license-seeking entrepreneurs of the private sector are only engaged in battles with the country's competitive politics, which informs much of the behaviour of the organised working class. This is a picture as far removed from any industrial revolution as it can be. The question is whether the people who made the strategic choice in the mid-50s were aware of these problems. Almost certainly not.

The earlier enthusiasm for the notion that an industrial revolution could be initiated and sustained in India under near-autarchic conditions did not last for more than a decade. By the mid-60s under conditions of severe food shortage, the search for an alternative strategy began. It was widely believed in the policy-making cir-

cles that the rapid industrialisation of the kind envisaged earlier could not be carried further. A Plan holiday was declared to gain time in order to choose a new course.

Again, a lot of cogitation took place around the problem of choosing a rational development strategy. The earlier industrialisation strategy was not considered feasible because it had its gaze fixed on the distant future. The possibilities of export promotion were discussed at some length. Eventually a new choice was made. This time, the Indian economy did not shift the gears of the old engine of growth; it shifted its attention to an altogether new object: agricultural development.

It is important to elaborate on this strategic choice because even now there is a great deal of misunderstanding on this score. The agricultural economy of India may or may not have been neglected in the earlier phase of development. However, research in plant genetics opened up new possibilities for agricultural growth, which needed to be taken into account in the country's overall development programme, particularly after the experience of the disastrous crop failures of the mid-60s. But, the choice-problem for the economy was not between agriculture and industry. In fact, in a country like India, this can never be a matter of choice involving wide variations among acceptable alternatives.

Since India is largely an agrarian economy and the bulk of her population lives on agriculture and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future, rural development and self-sufficiency in food production have to remain major goals in the country's development perspective. In fact, for a variety of reasons, agrarian reform and rural development constitute almost a precondition for industrial progress. For example, the purchasing power for industrial goods in a large agrarian economy cannot be created without such reforms and development.

Therefore, when the chosen strategy of industrial growth ran into difficulties, trying to resolve those problems by posing an altogether

new choice, i.e., between agriculture and industry, was certainly not calculated to promote industrial efficiency. In fact, it was likely to do the opposite: by shifting attention away from the industrial sector, the causes of its malfunctioning were also denied intelligent scrutiny. Even though there was much talk about export promotion, little attention was paid to finding out what was required for that, except merely talking about the usual formulae of devaluation and subsidies.

It is important to understand the reasons why the problem of strategic choice in the mid-60s was posed in that particular way. The earlier industrialisation strategy with its emphasis on the public sector and on State interventions was thought to be 'socialistic' in character. If that was not working, its categorial alternative, i.e., 'capitalistic' development should work. Meanwhile, research in plant-genetics had led to new possibilities in the agricultural sector where farmers with sufficient good quality land and with access to capital for buying fertilizers, seeds and irrigation equipment could build prosperous businesses for themselves.

Thus, the choice-problem before the Indian economy was perceived along a narrow and misleading ideological alley. It was not addressed to the nature of the difficulties which the country's industrialisation programme was facing or to the new opportunities which were opening up in the world market.

It is also important to analyse why India could not take advantage of the new openings in international trade in the 60s and the 70s. These openings came about as a result of the phenomenal growth experienced in the OECD countries. As mentioned earlier, several East Asian and Latin American countries developed their industries at rapid rates on the basis of these trade possibilities. The Indian economy, which already had a well-established industrial sector, was certainly in as good a position as any of these countries to take advantage of the possibilities for exporting manufactured goods. Of course, unlike those relatively small countries, India

could not have solved all her problems of unemployment and poverty on the basis of industrial growth alone, however rapid that growth might have been. But then, no single remedy can solve these problems in a poor country of seventy crores of inhabitants. But, nonetheless, fast industrial development certainly could have done some good by creating jobs and generating incomes within the country.

Why then could we not take that path? The usual answer is that we were not prepared to give up the 'socialistic' path we had chosen, i.e., our commitment to the public sector and to planning and State intervention. But, then, if one looks at the case of South Korea, which is perhaps the most successful amongst the fast-growing developing countries, one finds that their commitments to the public sector, State intervention and planning were certainly no weaker than ours. The public sector contributes a greater share of the gross domestic product in South Korea than it does in India. Even the composition of the public sector in South Korea is similar to that of India: steel, banking, transport, communications and the usual variety of capital-intensive industries. The South Korean State is, if anything, even more interventionist than the Indian State.

Compared to this country the South Korean State has achieved a far greater measure of success in scaling 'the commanding heights' of its economy, to use a familiar slogan. In the early 70s, the State directly controlled two-thirds of the aggregate investable resources of its economy and through a variety of direct and indirect measures guided the allocation of these resources along the priorities set by the planning process. Yet, unquestionably, it was a capitalistic path of development.

It is stupid to confuse the difference between capitalism and socialism with the size of the public sector or with the procedural differences between the free-market and the interventionist regimes. This is not the place to discuss the essentials of socialism; but it is important

to recognize that India is as much a private-ownership economy as South Korea. Furthermore, in a private-ownership economy, any scheme of State intervention which does not recognize the basic operational logic of the economic system becomes dysfunctional and counter-productive. If India wanted her industrial economy to compete for greater market-shares for its products in the world economy, she would have to create an industrial organization capable of doing that.

It is not difficult to outline the essentials of such an industrial organization. Let us look at the characteristics of three of the important economic activities which were responsible for much of the non-traditional exports from the newly-industrialised countries: garments, electronics and construction services.

Success in garment exports requires quick adaptation to consumer tastes and spending habits. Of course, the price of the product has to be competitive; but pure production cost does not amount to a large part of the ultimate retail price of the items sold in the department stores of the rich countries. The costs of identifying the saleable products and of selling them in the established outlets accounts for a great deal of the efforts of the successful garment exporter. This requires quick exchange of information between the producer and his market centres. Transfer of design and technology, easy availability of the materials in vogue (fabrics of certain types, buttons of certain specification, fasteners of certain quality, etc.) and prompt and regular deliveries of the products to the retail outlets are the really important components of any successful export effort.

South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan created market organisations with the required international linkages and thereby practically cornered the booming garment trade. India with her vast experience in the production of textiles and garments felt shy about creating such linkages and hence almost every year failed to meet even the quotas allotted to her in the West

European and North American markets.

In the field of electronics, it is usually not any complete and final product which is produced in, say, Hong Kong and sold in the U.S.A. The Hong Kong unit specialises in the manufacture of certain items of intermediate goods, usually labour-intensive ones, required for the ultimate assembly of the saleable product. Here, obviously, what is required is to attract giant multinational firms either to set up subsidiaries in the country or to establish sub-contracting arrangements with local firms.

In the case of the construction boom in the oil-rich middle eastern countries in the recent years, the South Korean construction firms made vastly more money than their Indian counterparts, in spite of the latter's obvious advantages in terms of the nearness of the market and the traditional trade and cultural links. It was so largely because of the Koreans' superior organizational skill in finishing the job in time and according to the required specifications. There were reports about Indian construction companies being totally surprised at being asked to pay out money for delays in construction according to the penalty clauses of their service agreements. Such things never happen back here at home.

Building a township or an airport involves the coordination of a large number of activities and the synchronisation of supplies from various sources. Research into the working of the South Korean construction industry brings out the importance of their organizational structure involving several layers of supervisory personnel and of their linkages with trading companies. The Indian firms working in the domestic environment never had the incentive either to acquire those skills or to build an organization capable of efficient handling of a project. At home, firms can make money if they are marginally better than the PWD — a feat, as everybody knows, not too difficult to achieve.

What these examples show is that international trade is no longer a

matter of arm's length transactions involving identical commodities. Competition with respect to price is of course important, but competition with respect to technology, design and product quality has become crucially important. The recent example of the court case in Britain involving the suppliers of Indian-made electric plugs and sockets illustrates this point. British consumers were suing the suppliers for selling ill-fitting plugs and sockets, which they thought were dangerous to install in one's house. In the protected home market, the Indian consumers have learnt to live with, and occasionally to suffer from, such hazardous fittings. The consumers elsewhere tend to be choosy. But one highly publicised court case can cause heavy damage to the reputation of export products from India. Who has the incentive to maintain, if not to enhance, this important market asset called reputation?

It is either the big firms in a monopolistic market condition or the trading agencies controlled by the State which can undertake such costly and time-consuming ventures. Therefore, it is not surprising that the successful operators in the field of international trade in today's world are either the multinational corporations of the western variety or the trading companies of the East Asian kind.

The crucial difference between these two forms of organisations is that the western multinational firms tend to go in for the vertical integration of all their production and marketing activities, whereas the East Asian trading companies tend to centralise their marketing functions while forming long-term contractual agreements with independent production units.

It is worth noting in this connection that the relative success of the East Asian trade-dependent economies with labour-intensive industrialisation compared to the similar countries of Latin America is largely due to the fact that the former relied heavily on the trading companies, while the latter relied on the multinationals.

In the case of India, neither were the western multinationals given easy access to the domestic economy, nor were indigenous trading companies encouraged to grow. Some of the big industrial houses of India have recently formed their own multinational firms; but that is mainly in order to operate inside certain South-East Asian and East African economies, rather than to create integrated trading organizations for the domestic production economy.

India did, however, create a big State Trading Corporation, whose job it was to promote and handle foreign trade. Over the years, the STC has grown in size and at present it handles a substantial part of the country's external trade. But, by and large, its sphere of action has remained confined to bilateral trade agreements between India and the centrally-planned economies of East Europe and to the movement of a few bulk commodities which again are related to imports into India. That is because the mode of operation of the managerial personnel of the STC could not be anything radically different from the management practices common to the public sector of the country in general. There are no inherent reasons why a public sector enterprise could not be aggressively market-oriented. In fact, there are instances in many parts of the world, particularly in France and West Germany, of publicly-owned commercial enterprises which have been immensely successful in competing in foreign markets.

But, in the cut-throat environment of world trade, success requires a kind of boldness, aggressive risk-taking, comprehensive forward-planning and follow-up, which the Indian Public Sector could not generate in its management personnel. Thus, the Indian industrial economy lacked either the incentives or the organizational structure required to achieve success in export trade at a time when the environment of international trade allowed such possibilities.

Today, such an environment does not exist. But the policy planners in India seem to have chosen to libera-

lise the country's trade regime now. What can they achieve? In some areas of the domestic production of exportables, the non-availability of imported inputs creates bottlenecks. Import liberalisation will no doubt remove those bottlenecks. But it is unlikely that in today's depressed conditions of world trade, these measures will lead to any substantial improvements in India's export earnings. But the import bill will undoubtedly go up at least in the short-run.

There are already signs of this, particularly with respect to metals, machinery and equipment. Therefore, trade liberalisation will directly worsen our balance of payments position. India's trade deficits have been mounting in recent years. A large part of it is no doubt due to increases in the price of crude oil in 1979-80. But after that, the growing deficit has been due to the increases in the payments on account of other items of imports.

This worsening of the country's balance-of-payments position is taking place at a time when the inflow of remittances from the Indian migrant workers to the Middle Eastern countries has stopped growing. The recession in the world market has drastically reduced the oil revenues of the Gulf countries. The phenomenal spending boom witnessed in this region in the last decade is unlikely to be repeated in the near future. This will affect India's foreign exchange earnings, not merely on account of workers' remittances but also on account of the export of construction and other technical services to these oil-rich countries.

Therefore, the liberalisation of India's trade regime at this stage will be of considerable disadvantage to the economy in the short-run. Whatever benefits are expected to accrue from this can come only in the long-run future. Moreover, these benefits are supposed to come about by way of inducing the domestic industries to become more competitive and efficient in response to foreign competition in the home market.

Of course, there is much to be said for correcting the lethargic and

wasteful behaviour of Indian industries. It should be good for the domestic consumers; and it should create conditions for an efficient and faster industrial growth for the country in the future. Moreover, when the conditions of international trade improve, India can take advantage of those trade possibilities if the domestic industries are alert, flexible and cost- and quality-conscious.

But, will trade liberalisation by itself necessarily lead to these outcomes? That it will is, of course, an article of faith with the orthodox conservatives. Harsh foreign competition and severe market discipline, according to these beliefs, are supposed to provide therapeutic remedies to wasteful and lethargic home industries. British conservatives have given a picturesque name to it: 'Cold Shower'. A 'Cold Shower' can certainly be invigorating; but it can also spread mortality amongst the ailing. The net outcome will depend on the nature of the industrial organization and the various supportive policy measures which accompany the 'Cold Shower' therapy.

There are good reasons to believe that the Indian policy planners have not thought through the full implications of their opting for trade liberalisation for the economy today. It will certainly be a harsh medicine for a number of domestic industries which have grown used to operating behind a protective wall. The experience of India's steel industry during the last two years is a case in point. The steel plants in the country were already operating under conditions of substantial under-utilization of capacity. When imports were allowed, capacity utilization fell to even lower levels, because the home industry could not compete successfully for its share of the home market.

There was no justifiable reason for this. In terms of either availability of raw materials or of long experience in producing iron and steel, the Indian steel industry suffered from no obvious disadvantages; it had substantial cost advantages with respect to the transportation

of finished goods to the market centres. The main reason why it lost a part of its domestic market was because of its inflexibility with respect to product-mix, quality and pricing rules.

The question is whether our industries can learn to adjust and, if so, how quickly. The answer would depend firstly on whether they can have a responsible and responsive management structure in the place of the fragmentation of authorities that is the current practice in the Indian public sector. Secondly, the policy changes could be slow and supportive. There is no reason why industries, particularly those in the public sector, should not be able to anticipate changes and adjust accordingly. Moreover, the government could also adjust its tariff and credit policies in such a way as to provide some protection against sudden blows as well as to promote changes in the desired direction.

The problems of making a lethargic and wasteful domestic industry efficient are extremely complex. They are more complex than those of setting up new units, because powerful vested interests and established operational practices are always difficult to fight. If the method of introducing efficiency has to be the classical one of competition and market discipline, then it is important to understand what is implicit in this method.

First of all, there has to be some measure of hard-headedness in allowing bankruptcies and closures. So far we have operated on the principle that every inefficient, sick industrial unit should be taken over by the State and continued in operation with financial support from the government budget. In fact, there are sick units in operation under social ownership today, which would be less of a burden to the economy if they were to be closed down even with full wages and salaries being paid to their employees in perpetuity. Obviously, no market discipline can make a dent on such an industrial structure.

A great deal of the harshness of the 'Cold Shower' can be alleviated if it is possible to design a framework

of State intervention which is both hardheaded and supportive. The Japanese and South Korean systems are admired for their effectiveness because in choosing policy frameworks for industrial development they did not think in terms of the supposedly mutually exclusive categories of free trade and State intervention. Those examples show that State intervention can promote the growth of an efficient, outward-looking industrial economy. But those interventions need to be both hard-headed and finely tuned in nature.

Moreover, the industrial structure on which these policy measures operate is also organised in such a manner that the fear of heavy penalties and the expectation of high rewards motivate individuals and groups responsible for the performance of industrial units.

If the required reforms in the industrial organization of the country and in the policy-framework of the government do not accompany the liberalisation of the trade regime, then the inevitable shortrun deterioration in the country's balance of payment will not be reversed later on. Then some people may demand a reversal of policy; but by then a demoralizing process of de-industrialisation might have been set in motion. It is far from clear that the Indian policy planners have examined all the various inter-linked policy issues in choosing a new trade regime for the economy.

To choose a development strategy is not merely to make a once-for-all assertion of faith. It is to make a continuing commitment to a whole set of inter-linked action programmes. Therefore, making a choice must involve serious assessment of the feasibility of certain outcomes and the sustainability of certain kinds of action programmes. A number of times in the past decades problems of choice among alternative strategies of development were posed in India. But the perception of the choice-problems usually remained limited to a narrow domain of value premises. Not surprisingly, the eventual outcomes of these choices remained disappointing to all.

Retrofitting

DINESH MOHAN

THOSE of us who attend meetings all the time are quite used to listening to the same things said over and over again. Even in the Hindi movies, everything has to be repeated by the hero's side-kick. This habit of ours serves many functions: fills time, gives importance to dignitaries, substitutes words for action and eventually turns falsehood into truth and potent myths. By this process, some ministers even 'earn' doctorates and others become 'good administrators'. But, at a more dangerous level, it awards distinctions and achievements to us as a nation. We become the third largest scientific force with the best scientists, and the tenth most industrial nation in the world.

It is not necessary to belabour the point that we are not the third, or even the fourth, fifth or sixth largest *scientific* force in the world. Others have done it often enough. Neither do I want to press home the point that on an average our scientific personnel are quite mediocre. I have done that elsewhere.¹ Here I want to focus on the issues concerning the recent changes in

policies regarding technology and industry in India.

After three decades of 'catching up' we are back where we started. We are contracting with foreign companies and governments for import of designs and processes in most of our industries: power, steel fertilizer, automobiles, aviation, consumer goods, etc. This is supposed to indicate that we are making concessions to 'free trade' and it will help us produce the latest and the best. There is tremendous pressure for letting in the multinationals, both from inside and outside the country. The fact that we have taken the largest IMF loan which that institution has ever given indicates that the policy makers have faith in the ideologies of such institutions. This is not an abstract statement. Even before we took the loan, we had increased the number of foreign collaborations allowed from 277 in 1976 to 526 in 1980. These are curious facts considering that we take great pride in our scientific and technological capability.

We claim that we are the tenth largest industrial nation in the world, neglecting our abysmally low per capita production. But even this

1. Dinesh Mohan: 'A Sea of Mediocrity' Seminar, February 1981.

claim is just a myth. For industrial output, World Bank statistics show us to be in the 22nd position not counting Saudi Arabia.² We are also very proud that Indian engineers and technicians work wonders in innovation and adaptation. A belief not borne out by facts or by comparison with other countries.³

Most of us seem to be convinced that if only we had more free trade and competition, more individualism, and greater import of foreign technology we could do wonders. After all, Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong have done it this way. Japan did it by copying and China is learning the hard way. Some even argue that IMF's prescriptions are not only good for the economy but win elections too.⁴ Mixing fact, fiction and misinformation with misunderstanding makes good myth material.

The fact is that it is difficult to compare India with too many nations. Its size and diversity narrow down the league to the US, USSR, Japan, Brazil, Indonesia and China. Most of our present models come from the ideology of the US and our misunderstanding of Japan. The USSR, Brazil and Indonesia are ignored. We use some of China's recent policies, taken out of context, to support what our upper classes would like to do for their own reasons any way.

The more ignorant even cite Singapore and Hong Kong as feasible policy models. They forget that if one built a wall around Bombay and threw out all the beggars, then Bombay by itself — but not greater India — could possibly be a Singapore. What we can learn from Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong is that it is possible to make high quality technical products, textiles and consumer goods cheaply outside

Japan. But that we do not do. Instead, our industrial elite press for some Singapore type laws and economic policies which obviously won't do.

Japan is used to justify foreign collaborations, the import of turnkey projects, and the import of outdated know-how. In personal conversations with me, very senior officials of the Birlas, Modys and Tatas have used the argument that this is the path Japan followed for its advancement. 'Japan never did any research but just copied', they claim. However, according to Shigeru Nakayama,⁵ the Japanese 'scientists changed from the old fashioned generation of academic bureaucrats to the new technically oriented, who advocated planning of scientific research for national goals' in the early part of this century.

Contrary to most popular notions, Japan has a long tradition of research, and private industry contributes as much as 59% of the total research funds in Japan now⁶ compared to 13% in India.⁷ In contrast with India, Japan has 'never had a policy of pursuing long-term agreements with foreign firms; instead, it has relied principally on short-term cooperative ventures'.⁸ Such agreements were usually backed up by heavy investments in in-house research, something hardly ever done by industry in India.

While we would like to copy what is not true of Japan, we tend to ignore what may be true but different from the western model. This has to do with the possibility that systems can be designed to make people highly productive without high mobility or the western concept of individualism. All of us are somewhat aware that the Japanese worker or professional does not face the

2. World Development Report 1982, Oxford University Press.

3. Technicians seem to keep things working if forced to in most semi-industrialized nations, e.g., cars of the 1940s and 50s vintage still run as taxis in Bogota.

4. Swaminathan S. Aiyar: 'IMF Conditions Win Elections'—I; *Indian Express*, Nov. 26, 1982.

5. Shigeru Nakayama: Characteristics of Scientific Development in Japan, p. 53, CSIR, New Delhi.

6. Marc Dupuis: Science and Technology in Japan, *Endeavour*, Volume 5:3, 1981.

7. Research and Development Statistics 1970-79, Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi.

8. Lund Letter on Technology and Culture, No. 4, June 1982

threat of a lay-off as much as in the US, but he still works.

There is also evidence to suggest that in Japan highly creative research groups display most or even all of the behaviour patterns which critics of science say are responsible for unimpressive work in uncreative research groups. In short,... the historical relationship between scientific creativity and individualism is almost entirely fortuitous.⁹

It is quite obvious that those who justify present policies in India on the basis of what they think Japan did and does will have to think again.

Let us take the Chinese case. Indians point out with glee that even the Chinese are now turning to foreign know-how. 'See, they have learnt the lesson of their past mistakes. So, let us in India now have even more foreign collaborations.' A curious double-think. We conveniently forget that the Chinese do not at present have over 100 multi-national subsidiaries operating on their soil and have not already signed over 6,000 collaboration agreements with foreign companies in the last 35 years as we have. Even the few agreements that they did sign in the last two or three years are being pruned.

We also like to believe that they have suffered technologically because of their policies. But let us examine the facts. We are proud of our achievements in space, nuclear energy and agriculture. China does not seem to be any worse off in any of these sectors. Even in computer technology they seem to be as good as the Soviet Union,¹⁰ which is better than us. We seem to be much better off in assembling or making under license many of the more elitist consumer products, but China does not seem to have done too

9. J.R. Bartholomew: 'Individualism and Science in Japanese Society.' Faculty Seminar on Science, Technology, and Future Societies, University of Michigan, 1975. Mimeo.

10. Jon Sigurdson: China's Tortuous Road to Autonomy in Technology and Science. *Endeavour*, Vol 5:2, 1981.

TABLE 1
Comparison of Industrial Production in India and China

Item	Units	India ⁺ per million population	China ⁺ per million population
Chemical fertiliser	thousand tons/year	4	12
Steel	thousand tons/year	9	27
Electric power	million KWh/year	166	316
Tractors	units/year	96	54
Food grain	thousand tons/year	193	322
Cotton cloth	million metres/year	14	15
Trucks	units/year	118	180
Fans	units/year	6000	10000
Cement	thousand tons/year	28	86
Radios	total number	29,000*	41,000
TV sets	total number	1,400*	5,500

Data collected from: India's Economy in Figures, 1982, CSO; India 1980; *China Reconstructs*, August 1982.

+ All data normalized by assuming India's and China's populations as 673 and 976 millions respectively.

* These figures are probably underestimates.

badly in the basic infrastructure and consumer goods either (Table 1). Even if these figures give only approximate ideas, it appears to me that in technological capability we are probably only at par with China.

The above facts show that we are not particularly better off technically so far as comparable countries are concerned. It appears that we are not utilizing our domestic potential fully and have neglected the basic products in favour of toys for the elite. Many have argued that this is bound to happen if the multi-national and foreign nexus is too strong. In fact this seems to have a disastrous effect on the morale of local scientists and engineers and even discourage innovation in products most important for us. M.R. Bhagawan has done a quantitative investigation into the innovative capabilities of Indian industry and concludes that 'India has now acquired substantial innovative capacity in the less science-related and the less research-intensive industries like machine tools, but is still very weak in those fields where science-relatedness and research intensiveness play a big role' and that 'about 2/3 of the innovation cited by the Indian capital goods firms are really quite minor technical

changes, adaptations and "improvements".'¹¹

In another study, Iyengar concludes that 'the fact remains that the contribution of R&D in industry pales into insignificance against major achievements in other developed countries' and as far as the drug industry is concerned, 'The basic R&D is still imported either through direct sales or through collaboration. This has resulted in a proliferation of fast selling formulations which have no relevance to the actual needs of a majority of the population.'¹²

Some of my students and I conducted a survey at the Indian Engineering Trade Fair held in New Delhi in February 1981. We questioned almost all of the exhibitors about their range of products, whether they had foreign collaboration, in-house R&D and which products they had developed because of their own R&D. Out of the 72 exhibitors sampled, 62 (90%) claimed they did have R&D but

55 (80%) admitted having foreign collaborations.

We could not identify a single product using modern technology which had been made in India without foreign collaboration—products that were completely indigenous and which could find an export market tended to be those with know-how more than 30 years old—obtained even at that time with foreign collaboration. It is not surprising then that Ph.Ds comprise only 8% of the R&D personnel in private industry.⁷

Foreign technology and foreign collaborations still command a great deal of respect. So much so that almost 70 per cent of more than 170 advertisers in *The Hindu's Survey of Indian Industry 1981* indicate in one way or another that they are associated with foreign know-how or foreign companies. The main news about modernization in magazines like *Business India* and the *Economic Scene* are about new foreign agreements being signed.

While these magazines have carried major articles on the evils of MRTB and FERA and foreign dumping in India, none of them have really initiated intelligent debate on the quality of indigenous technology and the role of the Indian entrepreneur in innovation and the strengthening of India's R&D base. The tenor of most articles which support more foreign collaborations and import of foreign technology is that this will help us catch up. It is not clear that even this purpose is served.

The Indian Railways imported know-how for electrical and diesel locomotives about two decades back and are planning to do so again. The Railways are again so far behind that they are contemplating import of know-how even for power transmission, signalling and many other systems. This is, of course, made very much easier with the availability of the World Bank and IMF loans. Few people know that some Indian Railway technology was abreast of the world in as far back as 1925. The Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway had the capability of designing and manufacturing locomotives as good as

11. M.R. Bhagawan : Innovations in Industry, Seminar, Feb., 1981.

12. M.S. Iyengar: The Status of Research and Development in the Private Sector, M.S.Iyengar Assoc, New Delhi, 1982.

anywhere else in the world. But we have not kept up, hence the need for this periodic shot-in-the-arm from abroad.

One can cite many other examples like the one above where we find that we have not kept up our lead in many areas of technology. In other areas we have refused to use to full advantage what we have produced indigenously. Our capabilities and achievements are not even assessed seriously and scientifically. When someone tries to start a serious discussion on such topics, he is immediately cut to size, as has happened to Ashok Rao, who has questioned BHEL policies with facts and figures.¹³

These are some of the most damaging effects of what constant reliance on foreign funds and foreign brains has on us. We are lulled into believing that we have achieved something very special when the real facts are not that spectacular. A large number of countries like Nigeria, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, etc., make many of the products that we do, though not the whole range. The main difference is in the pattern of ownership of the manufacturing units — the other countries have a much larger foreign share. But we have not taken full advantage of having a greater financial control over our industry.

There are obviously many reasons why we have not done so. The ones most commonly mentioned are the class structure of Indian society, the influence of multinational corporations and foreign interests, the comprador nature of our industrialist politi-

cians and managers, and finally the horribly inadequate system. It is not the purpose here to discuss all these issues.

There has been a great deal of debate on the economic fallout of the 5 billion dollar IMF loan and various other World Bank loans. But there is very little concrete discussion on how this open-door policy affects the technical establishment in India and its capacity to innovate and invent. One obvious effect of more foreign capital is more foreign influence on industrial choices and hence opting for foreign know-how.

Prabhat Patnaik goes even further and says that efforts to overcome technological parasitism, far from gathering momentum, are in fact receding further and further into the background, and this transition to freer access to multinationals goes 'hand-in-hand with an attack on trade-unions, civil liberties and political democracy'.¹⁵ But the effect on the morale and culture of the engineers and scientists is even more insidious.

The vast structure of the CSIR laboratories has been set up in the last thirty five years and the five Indian Institutes of Technology were set up in the early sixties. But none of these institutions play a major role in interaction with industry. A recent official report on higher technical education admits that the interaction between the IITs and industry is minimal.¹⁶ It further states that Indian Ph.Ds are not finding jobs in industry, the quality of post-graduate students in even the elite institutions is very mediocre, and that about 25% of the top engineering graduates of the best institutions go abroad.

What it does not discuss in detail are the facts that a very large proportion of the best engineering gradu-

13. *India Today*, July 15, 1982, p. 98. Rao has analysed BHEL's R&D and import policies but he has been prohibited from publishing his findings. Rao has filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court challenging BHEL's action.

14. See: B.M., Indigenous Technology and Colour T.V., *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XVII: 32, p. 1260; Nagesh Kumar: Regulating Multinational Monopolies in India, *Economic and Political Weekly*, XVII: 22, p. 909.; S.K. Goyal: New Industrial licensing Policy — A. Empirical Assessment, IIPA, New Delhi, 1982. etc.

15. Prabhat Patnaik: Foreign Capital and Technology in India's Economic Growth : Note, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Mimeo.

16. Report of the Review Committee on Post-Graduate Education and Research in Engineering and Technology, Ministry of Education and Culture, 1980.

duates never take up engineering jobs in India, that Indian scientists abroad are not applying for jobs in Indian institutions, inbreeding in our institutions is becoming the norm, honesty in science has ceased to be a concern, and that Indian industry has made only negligible investments in these institutions.

While everyone sheds crocodile tears over the 'braindrain' to foreign countries, there is very little talk about the internal brain drain— IIT graduates snatching up lucrative sales, managerial and even advertising jobs. M. Tech. scholarships are used to prepare for Central Services examinations. All these problems have arisen because there are very few challenging technical or scientific jobs offered by Indian industry. Present Indian industry doesn't want super engineers. They want super salesmen. Obviously, then, salaries for engineers and scientists would be, comparatively, very low. We are still a trading nation and production of knowledge is not that important to us. A very senior Tata executive once confided in me that they really don't need the 'egg-head types' since they can 'always get the technology from abroad.'

This free availability of foreign technology has further repercussions. Because the students do not really look forward to a scientific or technical career, they do not take knowledge seriously except to score high marks. This makes the instructors' jobs easier and, in turn, makes them lazy too. In long term research projects there is little demand for expertise from the faculty of our institutions and there is thus no external check on its quality. Even if a researcher is motivated, he finds that there is not much he can do outside the four walls of his institution — a 'sure recipe for cynicism, corruption, laziness and mediocrity. In the absence of demand, there cannot be outside checks and accountability, and our institutions and their scientists have become truly autonomous.

So, the industry's foreign collaborations end up influencing what happens in our academic institutions. These institutions also have their own foreign collaborations

and this confounds matters further. The defendants of foreign collaborations say that these inputs form only a minor proportion of the institutional budgets and so could not really effect our policies. But foreign tails at times can wag the academic dogs, and whole departmental policies get twisted to suit such concerns. Much equipment gets imported which is never used and 'research' studies are taken up which have no real purpose except clinching the foreign collaboration deal.

All this is well known to everyone concerned and a government committee was even forced to record that 'It is unrealistic and unproductive to base development strategies on the availability of massive foreign technical assistance... No foreign technical assistance programme should be such that it would perpetuate our dependence.'¹⁷ The Committee Report even lists imported equipment lying idle due to lack of spares. But reports break no bones and so with every year our collaborative programmes and bilateral agreements with the industrial nations keep increasing. At this rate we may end up turning our science and technology establishment into a vast red light area with academic call girls to suit every foreign taste.

It is clear to me that we have had enough of foreign inputs. We must now turn inward for some time and exploit our own potential. It is useless blaming the World Bank and IMF for our ills. They are only the external symptoms of our internal failures. When your fingers fall off due to leprosy it is useless debating the morals of the *Mycobacterium leprae*. It is best just to take your medicine and not give the bacterium another chance to be active in your environment.

The ideology and the policies of agencies like the IMF are well known and to pretend that one can deal with them without toeing

their line may be good politics but no more than naive machismo. These relationships certainly do not permit us to build a strong and vibrant industrial base immune to outside pressures. But the fact remains that we have built up a large industrial infrastructure which is the envy of most third world nations. We have a scientific force which due to its sheer numbers and some hard work contains some excellent professionals. They have to be put to work by creating a demand for their services. This can only be done by reducing the influence of pre-emptive foreign capital and know-how.

One can imagine straight off two ways of achieving this. The first is to try to make policy changes within the present set up. The second is to change the system itself — a revolution. The first option is unlikely to be very fruitful — people shaping the present policies benefit from them and feel little obligation to change them. The second option seems unreal in the present context. This leaves us unfortunately just the first option for the present and hazy scenarios for the second.

From the above discussion, it is clear that wholesale import of technology paralyses our scientific and technical institutions and they in turn get staffed mostly with second rate rejects from the mercantile ethos. And this is serious, because these are the academics who are going to be around for a long time to come. To end this downspiral our basic policies will have to change to involve our professionals in more meaningful activity.

We must decide which goods are essential for a vast majority of our people and concentrate on manufacturing them without foreign help. We can choose a few critical items where we may still need some foreign collaboration for the short run. But even in these the onus should be on the manufacturer to demonstrate that the technology is beyond our present capabilities. Moreover, no foreign collaborations should be permitted for elite toys and consumer goods. But, in the present political climate the elite will find a way to get their

toys. It would be better to import these outright within our foreign exchange capabilities. This would keep us from wasting industrial attention on trivial items.

We must aim to produce a few manufactured goods with a high science and research content which must be considered the best in the world. Unless we can compete internationally in some items that represent the latest in technology, we will not be able to exchange goods at favourable rates and pay reasonable wages to our workers. Exchanging our handicrafts for Boeings ensures more of the present unequal relationship where our wage rates are determined by the low value placed internationally on our goods.

None of these decisions can be made unless priorities are clearly identified. The Department of Science and Technology has spent a great deal of time in defining thrust areas in various fields. Though very competent persons have participated in this process, the areas selected are almost the same as those identified in the US. This is natural if our outlook is more international than national. It is not my contention that if all these areas were developed successfully they would not benefit our nation. However, I do believe that we cannot develop all these areas at once without foreign participation and dilution of effort. We have to be more selective.

We can be selective only if we change the outward looking ethos into a more inward looking one for some time. If we have to get anything from outside, we should get it through a pure business deal and not in the garb of bilateral aid and collaborations. Import of technology is not a neutral, value free act. It influences our policies and life style options in ways that may not be best for us.

In 1982 we are doing what we were doing in 1965 — importing a 'modern' infrastructure. If politicians, professionals and the industrial elite are allowed to continue their present policies, then in the year 2000 we will be back again to 1965.

The defence burden

JASWANT SINGH

IS Defence a burden? How can that be so when the invocatory terms which are used in this context have always informed us about it being a 'sacred duty'. Not only is 'no sacrifice too great' for it, indeed, we are enjoined to make every effort to ensure that 'all' requirements of 'defence are fully met'. That is all very well, but it still does not answer the central query. Instead of permitting concepts to be developed rationally, with cool precision and to a sharpened point of definition, this kind of superstitious gibberish arrests thought. Policy, then, effectively gets snowed under mountains of emotive weight. To question the validity of our defence thinking becomes an act of heresy, a sacrilege towards a 'sacred duty'. We seldom stop to deliberate that the nature of modern day warfare is one of the more complicated derivatives of this industrial age. When, therefore, an agricultural, handicraft based society has to wage war or to formulate a policy for its defence, how should it go about it?

The word 'society' is used on deliberate purpose. The decision to exercise the option of 'war', in the present day world, is not all that independent an expression of free choice. Therefore, when States are compelled to act, the consequential mobilisation is not merely that of the armed forces alone. A whole society has to gear up. It is not just in this respect that the distinction between the civil and military gets blurred. The total consequences of war-making are such that unless the 'internal' fibre of a nation has been

burnished, military muscle building by itself serves no other purpose than that of bloating.

'War' and 'peace' are no longer 'separable opposites', just as much as 'defence' and 'offence' are not. Either as concepts, attitudes or policies, though admittedly and for obvious reasons, no nation calls its Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Offence. That is precisely why clarity and definition of policy, arrived at through the process of an integrated and institutionalised system becomes so vitally important. All defence planning is on the basis of identified adversaries. This directly affects the structuring of weapons procurement policies.

The consequential but unavoidable linkage so established predetermines the choice of weapons systems, thus effectively blocking alternative options. The military then ends up by being the 'arbiter', not an 'instrument of diplomacy'. There is then the theory of the 'autonomy of military momentum'. The military machine once launched moves inexorably with a will of its own. Policies do not guide it. Rather, they are guided by the autonomy of its momentum. Unless, therefore, we comprehend the immensely complex nature of our defence effort, we will not have order in it. That which is disorderly is inherently wasteful and unquestionably, in parts, if not in the whole, a 'burden'.

We can examine this question either at this holistic level or at the

level of its components. Is the force level right? Is our equipping policy the most cost effective for our existing or likely needs? The question of one weapons system against the other; tanks, aircraft or naval vessels. Unquestionably, an audit of the components is essential. But if at the centre of our policy perceptions there is a void, then by merely investigating the peripherals and ad-hoc components of it, we would be preoccupying ourselves with the symptoms, not with the causes.

Field Marshal Lord Carver, in his book, *War Since 1945*, has had this to say about independent India's military efforts: 'Given their population and the size of their (India's) armed forces, their wars were very limited. Though the forces employed were large in terms of other wars since 1945, they produced few important lessons in the strictly military field, but provided many cautionary tales about how not to behave in the political-military sphere.' Pretty damning stuff — one could say. You could, of course, with equal facility, reject all this as the prejudice of residual imperialism.

On the other hand, do concede that the views expressed with such military directness are those of a distinguished professional. Then relate them to our track record in the decades since Independence. Soon after we achieved it, in the late '40s, we lost large parts of our territory, (J & K), to Pakistan. In the late '50s, we acquiesced in the annexation of Tibet and accepted the biting off of parts of the Aksai Chin plateau. In the '60s, we lost even larger parts of Ladakh and suffered a humiliating military reverse in the then NEFA. Our Kutch and Punjab operations of '65 were not the best demonstrations of 'political-military' ability. In the '70s, we contributed significantly to the formation of Bangladesh. How much of this was as a result of our ability and how much on account of Pakistan's inability?

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During this decade we then allowed the Indian ocean to become the preserve of super powers and to-

wards the end of it, silently accepted yet another foreign excursion on our subcontinent, this time by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. All this does not come out as an history of glittering and unqualified success, does it? Our response, however, continues to be in the stereotypes of the post climacteric trauma of 1962. In cliche form, it reads 'spend more', buy 'security'.

The government, while presenting the defence budget for 82-83, announced an all time high defence expenditure of Rs. 5,100 crores, which by itself is an increase of 21.4% over the previous year's spending. Since 70-71, a critical year in the subcontinent's history, (defence expenditure in which year was just under Rs. 1200 crores), our outlay on defence has gone up by a factor of times five. Assuming an average 20% over-run on budget estimates, the current year's spending could be in excess of 6,000 crores.

Even if we stayed with the budget estimates, then by the government's own admission, we would be spending just under 17% of the total government expenditure; over 30% of our non-Plan expenditure and just under 4% of our GNP on defence. In the last three years, we would end up by spending around Rs. 14,000 crores. At conservative estimates, the current defence five-year plan would involve an expenditure of over Rs. 50,000 crores, (at prices relevant to the late 70s).

If, therefore, the whole debate about national security and the defence of the country were merely that of 'spend more-spend less' on defence, then surely at such a level of expenditure, we should be perfectly secure in our cocoon of illusions. Indeed, the government voices precisely that sentiment when the Finance Minister, with bland disingenuity, evading all issues of substance, forwards the suggestion that 'In view of the uncertain external environment, the requirements of national defence should be met fully.'

The assumption here is that in some fashion money buys security.

This is a highly dangerous proposition. Yet it is of such absurd simplicities that we are now its prisoners. We accept expenditures of such volume, (40% of the total outlay of the sixth five-year plan), without questioning because, as the rationale reminds us in admonitory terms, it is our 'sacred duty'. There is no way of knowing whether what we are spending is adequate, insufficient, or excessive. But then it is not for us to know. We are but beasts of burden.

Defence and all related concerns are placed beyond our enquiry. Though without us there would be no defence, the government arrogates to itself the sole responsibility. Defence and its needs, we are informed with pompous obfuscation, are an 'imperative' beyond questioning; certainly by the likes of us who do not 'belong', who are outsiders. On most occasions this sharp put-down suffices. After all, 1984 is not all that far away and some people might perhaps be more 'people' than others. Maurice Pearton, in the *Knowledgeable State*, suggests a contrary view. He holds 'that imperative only means that no one has hit upon or devised an alternative course of action or has bothered to investigate one. The imperatives of policy, so far from being compulsions, are choices...The hall-marks of contemporary strategic planning are uncertainty, indeterminacy, choice between the more and the less probable. It is perhaps small comfort to suggest that final...obliteration may come about not because of the working out of some implacable occult imperative but because we are incompetent at making choices.'

Why is all this happening? Primarily, because at the centre of our thinking is a paralytic void. Unfailingly, therefore, the resultant structure of our total defence policy also becomes unsound. Ministry of Defence handouts inform us that the task of national security is the preservation of the country's 'territorial integrity' and 'its internal sovereignty'. This is indeed one of the tasks but it is certainly not a complete or even a satisfactory enunciation. Such a

point of view is limited, both in vision and in application. It is like saying that we live in a world which is comprised of States competing with one another. In such a world foreign policy is concerned with maintaining or improving our position in this competition. Success in this aim is... "security". The time honoured methods available being "negotiation, (diplomacy) and the use of force (war)".

The proposition, while appearing to answer, fails to satisfy. Whether internally or externally, the task is much more than a mere physical safeguarding of our boundaries. Therefore, unless we are clear in our minds as to what it is that we aspire to 'secure' and how, no formulation will be adequate. There will then never be clarity about why we 'arm' and how we ought to go about doing it. The resulting endeavours may well get called our defence effort but they will always be suspect and invariably burdensome.

Our central concern is with the preservation of the Indian nation. Until we are clear about the core values of our nationhood and are able not only to articulate them intelligibly but also to obtain a national commitment to them, we would not even know what it is that we are attempting to defend. These core values may well be destroyed if the nation is subjected to alien rule in any form, (current manifestations of imperialism are highly sophisticated), but certainly they are not preserved only by maintaining our geographical boundaries as physically inviolable. From out of this realisation ought to emerge principles towards which the nation aspires. Only then would we be enabled to determine a hierarchy of national interests, not just a list of ad-hoc, tactical formulations but almost a charter of history. Only such soaring aspiration can give a clearer direction to the structuring of our national goals. Security tasks are then but derivatives.

War and peace do no longer represent 'opposite poles of experience'. The polarity of peace and

war having ceased to be axiomatic, preparedness for war is no longer a matter of keeping the barracks manned and the powder dry. It is a continuous activity, reaching into all aspects of society and eroding, even nullifying conventional distinctions about the "civil and military" spheres of life. It follows, therefore, that the integration of all the factors which go towards making a nation's defence policy, (and consequential ability), is not merely a 'function of horizontal linkages, it must mesh, it must have depth.' Foreign and defence policy is thus not an isolated activity conducted from some private enclave. The involvement of the society has to be total.

The prime requirement is of 'national will'. The 'internal' factor is thus the nuclear core of our security concerns. Our internal policy, our attempts at the eradication of appalling poverty through the exciting instrument of a participatory form of governance, our attempts at the creation of a sane, civilised, liberal and accommodative social and political order, are parts of the central core of this concern. Unless these are accepted, we would fail to achieve that absolutely vital aspect of nationhood — a feeling of belonging, of being part of a collective effort, of being 'one of the 'us'' as against 'them'. It then follows irrefutably that no government that arrogates to itself the sole right of national security concerns and does not take into account the building up of and the creation of a 'national will', must without any doubt whatsoever, fail in its task.

There is an insufficient understanding of the fact that whenever the political centre of India has demonstrated an absence of statesmanlike ability, regionalism has always asserted itself. This is a self-preserved mechanism; not some externally inspired Machiavellian design against us. If we do not take into account the consequences to our security resulting from disaffection amongst the peoples of 'strategically sensitive border States', then we alone are responsible both for the cause and the effect, not any outside force.

Two more internal factors need to be highlighted. The first is the obliteration of the distinction between the State, the government and the party. This is a highly dangerous development. Indeed, one might ordinarily treat the further 'refinement' of this thesis, in the reduction of the party to merely being an extension of an individual's personality, as farcical, if in such a development did not lie the seeds of grave tragedy. Nations do not any longer fight for an 'individual'. The will to die voluntarily has to have a transcendental element to it. Unless there is 'devotion' to a cause, soldiers would not really 'go over the top'.

There is a very serious decline in this quality, both in the Indian people as a whole and in our defence forces, which after all are not importees from some foreign planet. They are an integral part of our society and reflect, albeit somewhat mutedly, the inner pulls and contradictions afflicting the rest of us. Have we ever stopped to think about the irreparable damage that we do to the fighting quality and will of our soldiery when we employ them in patently political roles? When we ask our soldiers to quell civil disorder, caused by political ineptness, demanding of them to 'shoot to kill', we are debasing an honourable calling.

This enormous price is paid not in the defence of the country but for bolstering up gangs riddled with corruption, masquerading as political parties. Has any assessment ever been carried out of the grievous harm that is being done to the fighting ability of our forces, which have now been in a near permanent state of development, in aid to civil authority, in the north-east? Occupation destroys the soul of the fighting soldier. Have we calculated how much harm is done to their morale by being reviled in the press, as they are currently, for their acts of omission and commission in the north-east? Since Independence, we have forgotten why it is that soldiers fight.

Anybody who has served in the ranks of the armed forces would

readily testify that in the dreary routine that the waging of war ordinarily is — boredom, discomfort, homesickness, sex starvation — the longing for peace dominates the thoughts of the anonymous soldier, not hatred for the invisible enemy. Arthur Koestler has said that 'the theory that wars are caused by pent up aggressive drives which could find no other outlet, has no foundation, either in history or in psychology. The enemy...is an abstract entity, a common denominator, a collective portrait.'

Soldiers fight this invisible, impersonal enemy not because they are motivated by aggressive feelings towards it, but for love of and devotion to country, religion, cause or just plain commitment to the honour of their unit of service. It is this 'devotional' quotient which converts itself into the otherwise difficult to quantify factor of morale. It is precisely this factor which is of crucial significance when we take into account the internal as an integral aspect of our national security concerns.

And what is the instrument through which we hope to achieve this commitment? At the directly functional, executive level, we continue to operate in a set-up which in its totality is a legacy of a part-time staff officer of Mountbatten's. Lord Ismay, on his way back to U.K. and taking time off from farewell partridge and duck shoots, gave independent India the outlines of an organisation for its Defence Ministry and its Service Headquarters. With perfect bureaucratese, all that we have done in the past 35 years, is to add to it such indigenous innovations as would ensure its total unworkability.

Since Independence, not once has a White Paper on Defence been issued. There is frequent and fashionable talk about 'teeth vs. tail' ratio. Have we ever stopped to think that in these largely futile debates, the one segment of our defence organisation that continued to grow inexorably, almost with a life of its own, was the Ministry of Defence itself. This is really the 'tail

that wags the dog'. It is this 'tail' that needs to be docked. Not because one questions civilian control, but because the whole system is not directed towards efficiency and promptness. Such a system does not strive at decision making. Its efforts, on the contrary, incline towards finding ways to continue to say and do nothing, neither a yes nor a no. The Ministry of Defence is the only Ministry with three tiers: the Defence Ministry itself, Ministry of Defence (Finance), and the respective Service Headquarters.

Just try and visualise how this Leviathan actually works. Let us take a hypothetical situation. Suppose a plan is prepared by the user service; normally it would make its laborious way through the Committee of Defence Planning, to the Ministry of Defence, Defence (Finance), and then go on to the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs where the concerned Service Chief might be asked to explain. Thereafter, a formal sanction might be obtained. (Time taken up to this point: on an average, five years). If then, by some mischance, and this is more the norm than the exception, a component of this plan has to be altered, then just for this component, one would have to traverse this entire labyrinthine route all over again.

The result, predictably enough, is bewilderment in your mind and in mine but far more disastrous than that is what it does to the functioning of our war machine. It does what Woody Allen, in a quip said, 'he was trying to do to a girl and which President Eisenhower had already managed to do to the administration of the U.S. of A.' Seldom is equipment available when needed. By the time it does finally arrive, the cost is inevitably in many multiples of the original estimates. Also, it might well by then be dated by the changed circumstances and, finally and criminally, it might also by then be inadequate for the original purpose. Is it any wonder then that our defence effort becomes a burden?

Acceptably, the most challenging task faced by those entrusted with

the execution of our defence policy is in the field of military hardware. The technology of modern day warfare, as a further refinement of the 'autonomy of military momentum', has acquired an independent existence of its own. In the early stages of the industrial revolution, technological advancement contributed to the manner of the conduct of war, e.g., steam engine (railways, steam vessels), the internal combustion engine (tank), the aeroplane, etc. This cause-effect order has now been reversed. The continuous competition in acquiring yet greater ability to destroy and the very high obsolescence in military hardware now provides the spur to research and development.

It is no longer the civilian endeavour that benefits the military by a fall-out. The passage of goods is the other way around. And the options are limited. More so when we take into account the critical lack in our defence effort of strategically important metals, of missiles and in electronics. One need hardly point out the obvious dependence on sophisticated weaponry like aircraft and tanks. But whereas in this latter field some options can be exercised, not so in the sensitive areas of metals, missiles and electronics. Because 'weapons are now so complex and costly and make so many demands on the national capacity', therefore, 'any decision in favour of one system rather than another must involve a prior policy decision as to its likely use'. Weapons procurement is theoretically to meet a specific threat, envisaged as one most likely to happen. The safest and the most easily adopted course in such situations is the 'worst case' option.

Political leadership, not knowing enough, relies on 'experts', who not being clairvoyant take shelter in oversecurity by piling 'worst' upon 'worst'. This difficulty is compounded by the 'leadership' not understanding the advice it is receiving, leave alone questioning its basic assumptions. Idiotic and silent acquiescence, therefore, passes for wisdom. This 'worst case' syndrome results in two simultaneous arms races; one with the possible oppo-

ment and the other by the government, against its own inadequacies and therefore with itself. The former can often be quantified. The latter is a black hole.

In this whole business of weapons procurement in India, as always, we complicate matters further by three other absurdities. The first one is that we seem to acquire weapons from where we can, (limited options here), then build a strategy of their employment around them. Our next great failing is to seek security in numbers and in 'capability matching'. This is the standard trap and of course we have fallen into it. Inevitably, we then rush headlong into the perils of 'over-sophistication', the third folly. The present is not the occasion for a detailed discussion of the attempts being made in the current armament procurement drive and of achieving various kinds of 'capability matching' in, for example, aircraft. It would involve too technical a discussion of the merits-demerits or of the relevance or otherwise of one weapons system against the other.

Yet, there has to be an illustration of 'over-sophistication'. David Hackworth, a Vietnam war veteran, writing in the *Guardian Weekly* gives the hilarious example of 'Maxwell Taylor's nuclear rifle'. 'That was the Davy Crockett. It looked like a recoilless rifle. It shot a half kiloton nuclear bomb. The first problem was that it barely shot it a mile before it went off, which is closer than anybody wants to be to a nuclear explosion. The second problem was that it was meant to stop tanks coming over the hill at speed, and a corporal in the field manning this thing needed so many clearances to fire a nuclear weapon that it took at least two and a half hours to get permission, by which time the tanks could be in Paris. The third problem was that after the brass had okayed the firing of this weapon, the corporal had to call up every friendly soldier in the area and tell him that a nuke was about to be shot off, so the friendly soldier would know not to look in that direction and be blinded.' Are we not also somewhere burdening our defence efforts with our own 'nuclear rifles'?

Let us recognise that defence does not follow mere militarisation. There are disturbing signs that, as in the past, we are currently witnessing this all over again. The government adopts a posture that is both traditional and easy. It speaks for strong defence but, in the process of doing so, it adopts a voice and tone of strident militancy. The intentions and military preparations of an opponent of the past are put across to the public only in a threatening and military light. This results in a destructive militarisation of not just the issue of national security but indeed of all public discussion about it. Our policy with the neighbourhood adopts the language of 'winning' conflicts. 'Reconciliation of differences' takes a back seat. It is thus that the military factor comes to dominate diplomacy.

Irrefutably enough, one of the objectives of foreign policy is security. The relationship, however, of weapons with security is far more ambiguous. 'The operative hope is ... that producing/procuring weapons will obtain security in much the same way that applying the law is intended to produce justice. But "security" is as protean a concept and leaves open as many questions as to how it is to be achieved.' Defence will thus continue to remain a burden for so long as there is lack of clarity about its basics. Are we perhaps not an exception amongst the so called 'peace loving' fraternity?

We have repeatedly had to fight with two of our major neighbours and still remain in a state of military readiness against them. With the rest of our neighbourhood our comportment is of prickly unease. At home we like to display unctuous political vegetarianism. When dealing with neighbours we adopt the behaviour and the manner of an uncaring carnivore. The schizophrenic origins of our defence burden lie in this fracture. In 'peace with neighbourhood' is the seed of future benefit for the entire South Asian region. Our defence burden can be reduced only by cooperative care. That is today's new 'imperative'.

Confusion among the nations

RAJESHWAR DAYAL

THE world of today is being tossed between dangerous rapids and whirlpools and is hurtling along an unpredictable course. Signals of alarm are stridently raised about the perilous international-military political situation. The warnings come from all quarters of the globe; from Moscow and Washington and from the capitals of the non-aligned States. The economic and social conditions are unfathomable and chaotic and a sense of uncertainty and insecurity prevails. Gone are the comfortable certainties of the early seventies when, despite a world recession and inflation, the atmosphere was comparatively relaxed and there was a sense of progress and hope of growing international cooperation.

What has caused this overwhelming change of mood and perspective during the last few years? Is it a reflection of a general malaise, which like an uncontrolled epidemic, has infected humankind? Or is it caused by the seeming collapse of the world economic system and the resultant widespread unemployment and distress? Or is it perhaps rooted in deep social discontents which have welled up into a general sense of frustration and cynicism? Has there occurred a collapse of the international political system and of world order? And, finally, is there a sudden aggressiveness on the part of the super powers which now seek to further their global interests not by political means but by threats or the use of force?

It would be too facile as well as fallacious to point to any one cir-

cumstance as being responsible for the present state of confusion the world over. That it is general and not confined to any region or continent, cannot be denied. Acute public dissatisfaction expresses itself daily all over the world in a myriad different ways, while contradictions in the long-accepted order of things, upsetting conventional beliefs, are everywhere manifest.

Let us first examine the international military-political scene. In the fifties and until the mid-sixties, the world was polarised between the two antagonistic power blocs, with an increasing multitude of ex-colonial countries milling around, trying to preserve their precarious independence. The broad issues of the day were communism versus anti-communism with a fledgling non-aligned movement trying to keep clear of both and championing various noble but forlorn causes.

Gradually, the acerbities of the cold war began to give place to a mood of greater relaxation, with an upsurge of prosperity in the capitalist countries of the West. In this multipolar world, the middle group of countries began to find themselves bereft of a platform with the collapse of the colonial system, general progress towards the widening of human rights and condemnation of racialism and a greater assurance of world peace. Non-alignment had to discover a new content.

The last few years have, however, seen a reversal of the tide. The

prolonged recession and the successive oil price shocks have blunted the growth of or shattered many bloated economies, including that of Japan. The developing countries are also reeling under the shock and their hopes of ultimate redemption from their grinding poverty have been further deferred. The phase of detente has come to an end and even the world itself has been banned from the political lexicon. Crisis has succeeded crisis in practically all fields, national as well as international.

To deal with these crises, the leadership in practically every country has fallen to mediocrities and party operators. Gone are the days of the wartime giants or the architects of the independence movements who were inspired by idealism and a broad vision of the future. In place of statesmen, we now have politicians; instead of pathfinders and prophets, we have manipulators. In these times, when vast changes are taking place in science and technology and new worlds are opening up, the leadership and the institutions which govern us are hopelessly outdated in their concepts and ideas. The widening chasm between performance and expectation is causing deep-rooted imbalances and discontents.

In the democratic countries, therefore, recent elections have toppled existing party governments, the voters presumably hoping that any change would be for the better.

In the United States, the ineffective but well meaning Jimmy Carter was followed by the swashbuckling Ronald Reagan with his strong views. Reaganomics has far from succeeded in rescuing the economy; in fact, unemployment is higher than ever before and shows little signs of diminishing. Having drastically reduced taxes, Reagan was forced to impose new ones and instead of the promised balanced budget, there will be a record deficit of over 150 billion dollars. Despite the distress caused by large-scale unemployment, welfare benefits have been drastically reduced, adding to social discontent. The inflated military budget has led to a nationwide

peace movement and opposition to the continued stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

Reagan has sought to justify his vast military preparations by invoking the McCarthy demon of a militant communism and an aggressive Soviet Union, bent upon world domination. Backed by the Pentagon hawks, the inflated expenditure on weapons of mass destruction is claimed to be essential to neutralise the alleged nuclear superiority of the Soviet adversary. But these assumptions are strongly rebutted by knowledgeable circles in the United States, led by George Kennan. Even the general US public is sceptical about these premises, while Congress is doubtful.

The recent election results show a growing disenchantment with Reaganism. The United States had hoped to rally its reluctant European partners to support economic sanctions against the Soviet Union as a penalty for the imposition of martial law in Poland and the suppression of 'Solidarity'. But, for its part, it has continued its massive and profitable wheat sales under pressure from its powerful farm lobby.

The row with its European partners flared into the open over the Euro-Siberian gas pipe-line. Besides supplying a cheap source of energy, the project was advantageous to the sagging economies of the recipient countries and also provided some much-needed jobs. There was an open rebellion and a flat refusal to toe the line, with even the compliant Mrs. Thatcher joining the mutinous ranks. The recent decision to withdraw the ban was really an acknowledgement of its inefficacy. Popular fear and mistrust of US policy in Europe had already been greatly aroused by the Reagan administration's strategic doctrine based on the use of 'tactical' nuclear weapons, euphemistically called 'theatre weapons', in Europe.

The US's 'special relationship' with Britain received another jolt over the Falklands' issue in the UN. After fully backing Britain, the US has been backtracking by pressing for negotiations and trying to mend

its fences with its South American neighbours whom it had alienated.

Support for Israel, whose aggressiveness has raised serious opposition in Israel itself and has aroused misgivings even among American Jews, has bitterly angered the US's Middle Eastern friends, including such staunch supporters as Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Lebanon.

As for the non-aligned and developing States, the Reagan administration's stock is lower than with perhaps any other US administration, the US appearing as an opponent of the poor countries and of a fair and equitable world economic order.

Soviet policies too have been floundering in uncertainty and ambivalence. The Soviet Union has lost much credibility among its constituents in the developing countries by its prolonged and considerable military activity in a non-aligned country—Afghanistan. It is a basic principle of the non-aligned movement to oppose the incursion of foreign forces, no matter under what pretext, into another country. The Soviets remained discreetly aloof from conveying any assistance to the beleaguered Palestinians in Beirut, thereby casting doubts on its affirmations in the countries which it was trying to woo in West Asia. In the Irano-Iraqi war, it appeared to be helping one side and then the other. It was virtually expelled from Egypt, a country with which it had long-standing ties. Its relations with China are still in a mess.

The myth of the monolithic unity of the Socialist bloc has long been exploded; Poland is the most recent example of the restiveness of the client States. Once the Soviet armies are removed, they may well go their different ways.

Internally, the economic situation in the Soviet Union continues to stagnate. This year, again, the import of over forty million tons of foodgrains amply demonstrates the continued failure of the agricultural front on which such a large percentage of Soviet citizens are engaged. Brezhnev complained very

recently of the sagging economy, the technological backwardness and general inefficiency of industry. In contrast to the industrial and agricultural sectors, the military arm is over-developed.

With Brezhnev's disappearance from the scene, will his policies of caution and detente survive under the successor regime? It is too early yet to say whether the Soviet Union will be ruled by a single dominating personality or by a collective. If a struggle for primacy among the supposedly equal members of the ruling group should develop, the situation would become still more imponderable. Andropov has risen to the top largely through the party apparatus; to the outside world he is known largely as the head of the KGB for 18 years and as Ambassador to Hungary during the 1956 uprising. In those capacities he did not display any dovelike tendencies. Yet, with wider responsibility and the example of his predecessor, he may perhaps follow the path of caution. At any rate, the demise of a powerful leader is bound to leave a vacuum until the successor acquires the necessary experience and displays the required qualities of leadership in a very complex world situation.

The western Europe countries, for their part, are chary of U.S. policies and methods while their suspicions of the Soviet Union have hardly abated. Sandwiched between the two super powers, they feel exposed and vulnerable. They strongly urge a dialogue between the super powers and a continuation of the arms limitation and Helsinki talks.

In this confused international situation, the non-aligned powers, whose bloated numbers are in inverse proportion to their strength and cohesion, present a picture of fragmentation and disarray. Instead of joining together in concerted action to face the perils of the times, they are too involved in their own quarrels and petty concerns. Each seems to be ploughing its own lonely and rather barren furrow pursuing national interests narrowly conceived. It has been estimated that more than a hundred wars have been fought in and between

the developing countries since the end of World War II, the latest example of fratricidal strife being the current destructive war between Iran and Iraq.

The economic crisis has hit the developing countries hard and depressed living standards still further in all but the OPEC countries. The elan of the early post-independence years has evaporated and there is a general sense of frustration and disillusionment. Political structures are collapsing and rampant corruption and mal-administration have fuelled general discontent. Few of the developing countries have any coherent economic or social policies and there is an atmosphere of drift and opportunism. Far from being able or willing to help each other, they seem incapable of helping even themselves.

True, the non-aligned group has its periodic gatherings and adopts familiar and rather ritualistic resolutions on a fair and equitable world economic order, on racialism and colonialism, on peace and disarmament. But these resolutions seem to lack conviction. There is no evidence of determined follow-up action, no passion in the movement, which has assumed the character of a routine gathering.

There is a cold war situation in the world today which might well intensify depending upon the policies of the new Soviet leadership. In his first speech as Party Secretary, General Andropov has ominously warned that peace rests on the 'invincible might' of the Soviet Army. If this is the theme that his regime will pursue, the cold war would be far more threatening and dangerous than that of the fifties, as the level of armaments, particularly nuclear weapons, is far higher than ever before. And it continues to grow at an alarming pace, even the poor countries wasting their limited substance in joining in the frantic race towards self-destruction.

This is the time for the non-aligned movement to shake off its torpor and concert and pursue a determined strategy of action to face the growing peril as it did in its early years. It must end the frag-

mentation in its own ranks and develop a new set of policies and ideas. It should launch new initiatives to restore the breakdown in communications between the super powers and revive the process of the peaceful settlement of disputes. The first priority is to reduce the level of tension and prevent the drift towards an armed clash whose consequences could be of staggering proportions. In cold war conditions the task of development of the poor countries would be severely impeded and hopes of an equitable world economic order would recede into the indefinite future.

But to strive for peace and relaxation of tensions, one must set an example of peaceful behaviour oneself. The non-aligned countries must set up machinery to solve their disputes among themselves by means of negotiations and conciliation. They should cease to be the dumping ground of the arms dealers of the world, seeking security instead in a relaxation of tensions rather than in the piling up of obsolete armaments which they can ill afford anyway.

So long as the super powers' energies are diverted towards their vast military preparations, they will be deaf to all appeals for co-operation in sharing the resources of the ocean floor — the common heritage of mankind — or in making any really meaningful transfers of technology or raising the level of economic assistance to the developing countries. There will be a growing trend towards bipolarisation, with all its attendant dangers.

The non-aligned summit to be held in March 1983 under India's chairmanship, presents both an opportunity and a challenge. To India it provides an opportunity to take a lead in guiding the movement as a united front along new lines, to meet the challenges and dangers that confront the world. Much of the success of a conference depends upon the chairmanship, which is not merely a formal function, but much more that of a guide and pace-setter. Now is the time for the non-aligned movement to come out of the side-lines into the open and to make its influence felt by

positive initiatives and a much more active role.

India under Nehru, along with Yugoslavia's Tito was the main architect of the non-aligned movement. To regain its former position in the comity of nations and among its non-aligned associates, India must first put its own house in order.

No matter what official statistics and hand-outs may claim, there is deep underlying discontent in the country caused by exorbitant prices, a staggering increase in unemployment, a collapse of law and order which is near total in some States, rampant corruption, administrative inefficiency and a breakdown and denial of ethical values in public life. In fact, there is an ominous disenchantment with the entire system in practically every field — political, governmental, administrative, economic and social.

In the public eye, the elected representatives are engaged more in feathering their own nests than in promoting the public weal. There is no coherent opposition party, no credible alternative government. Even the ruling party lacks a grass-roots organisation, while the other splinter parties are more regional than national. There seems to be a drying up of leadership, the government resting fragilely on a single pair of shoulders. The confusion in the political scene is fully reflected in the administration which is near collapse in some States. The judiciary, which had an impeccable record, has lost its high reputation and is often suspect.

Political slogan-mongering notwithstanding, the line of absolute poverty is rising. Inequalities have increased spectacularly and the yawning gap between the rich and poor has become a chasm. The social ills of the country have been accentuated; casteism has spread like a virulent epidemic, the minorities feel a sense of oppression; superstition and ostentatious worship have taken the place of true spirituality. Neither the government, nor any political party, has offered a programme with a nation-

wide appeal to deal with these evils. Instead, 'empty' exhortations have taken the place of constructive action. No social reformers or social reform movements have arisen to offer a corrective.

In its external policies, India has tended to look more inwards and to withdraw into its own shell, too engrossed with its internal problems to pay much heed to the needs of others. A broad world-view, such as Nehru had, is lacking and there seems to be more pettifogging than statesmanship in policy-making and execution. India has, in the past, always been careful to carry its non-aligned partners with it, realising full well that a country, weak in economic and military strength, would not carry much influence in isolation. However, on Kampuchea and Afghanistan, we chose to go it alone, giving rise to the charge of tilting towards a particular super power, and losing ground even among our friends.

Also, as leaders of the non-aligned movement and upholders of detente and peace we should not expose ourselves to the accusation that we do not practise what we preach. Let us begin by mending our long-broken fences with our immediate neighbour, Pakistan. It would be most damaging if the impression were to gain ground that while Pakistan was genuinely striving for peace and had, in fact, taken a very positive initiative to promote it, India was fighting shy of moving forward and taking shelter behind procrastination and legal quibbling.

Until now, it was Pakistan that had turned its back on a No War Pact offered by India and had therefore been accused of harbouring militant intentions. The boot should not now appear to be on the other foot. The nature of the Pakistani regime is hardly relevant so long as it can deliver the goods. After all, we do have good relations with a lot of regimes whose democratic and socialist credentials are far from savoury. As Deng of China has said, it does not matter if the colour of a cat is black or brown so long as it catches mice! If we can combine the Indian pro-

posal of peace, friendship and co-operation with the Pakistani one, so much the better. For too long have we harped on the negative side of the Indo-Pakistani complex; let us for a change look at and develop the positive.

For one thing, the vast non-productive expenditure on arms, much of it in foreign exchange, would no longer be justified. A greatly reduced defence paraphernalia would release enormous funds for the constructive tasks of development. How ironical that Gandhi's country, still wallowing in abysmal poverty, should maintain the third or fourth largest standing army in the world. Better relations with Pakistan would have a powerful impact on our other neighbours as well and perhaps offer a glimpse of the prospect of an ultimate association or confederation of the South Asian States, a distant aspiration voiced by President Zia and one that Prime Minister Nehru had also dreamt of.

If traditional enemies like France and Germany could so soon after such bloody wars become fast friends, surely India and Pakistan which were one country until very recently, should not find it impossible at the very least to normalise their relations. India's influence in the world would grow enormously if the debilitating quarrel, more psychological than anything else and savouring of the rivalry between the Muslim League and Congress, were out of the way. In West Asia and South East Asia, India would be greatly looked up to as a wise and far-sighted friend. And its voice would again be listened to with attention by the super powers, who would no longer be able to play off the subcontinental powers against each other. One does not have to be a prophet to visualise the vast gains that would accrue to both countries.

In the midst of the confusions surrounding India as well as those within, perspectives could still open up, leading to a better world and to a better future for the subcontinent's masses. But it needs vision and statesmanship to grasp the opportunity and turn adversity into a new beginning.

The regional priorities

JAGAT S. MEHTA

FOREIGN policy is all about safeguarding long term national interests in a system of independent nation States. Democracy derives its legitimacy from the periodic mandate of the people. One asks, therefore, whether a democratic system which must, from time to time, go through a populist short term oriented scrutiny, can have an optimally effective foreign policy? Even in adjusting to a changing world, the direction of foreign policy demands broad consistency and continuity. Security cannot be safeguarded nor can planned development be achieved with short-term answers or periodic aberrations which play on past fears or exaggerate external ambitions for the future.

The world is familiar with the periodic paralysis of U.S. foreign policy because the constitutional process subjects the chief executive to elections every 4 years and the complexion of the legislature may even change during the mid-term of presidential tenure. Fortunately, the slow pace of the democratic system has an in-built corrective process which brings it back to centre course whatever government is voted into office. The consensus on national interests in relation to the outside world asserts itself and yesterday's opposition, after getting the reins of office, finds itself following in the footsteps of its political predecessor.

The Reagan Administration, which came to office with a mandate

to re-establish American military and political superiority over the U.S.S.R., is slowly veering back to the realities of an international system which, even along with security vigilance, demands serious arms-control talks and negotiated inter-bloc easing of relations. Everywhere, the regional realities are defying U.S. disciplining and strategic globalism.

The problems of foreign policy for India in its relations with the super powers and the region during the last year, indeed in a broader background over the last decade, also illustrate the imperative of continuity, regardless of change in the domestic political dispensations. There has, of course, been a broad consensus on non-alignment as the fundamental framework for the country's foreign policy ever since independence. No one at any end of the political spectrum questioned that India should not become part of a military alliance system. But even India's non-alignment, principled as it was, was coloured by its own national circumstances. It was conditioned by the Partition and its aftermath of mass migrations, the question of Kashmir and Indo-Pak suspicions and tensions.

With specious pretensions of anti-communism, Pakistan joined the western alliance system but with the transparent purpose of arming itself against India. As a reflex, India

sought and found strength in developing political, economic and, later, arms-supply relationships with the communist bloc. As a consequence, the regional Indo-Pak cold war, with three eruptions into actual conflict, got enmeshed in the big cold war. The problem, ever since, has been to delink them.

The confident warmth of Sino-Indian relations in 1954-59 was based on the faith that, notwithstanding a common frontier, nationalism in India and China had a bond of anti-imperialism, and long term commitment to peace and co-existence in Asia. When the global competition between the two power blocs was at its most intense, our non-alignment could also presume on the economic support of the West. We now tend to look back on the fifties as the golden age of our international standing, when independence, national security and international economic cooperation were harmoniously blended around non-alignment.

Our faith in non-alignment received its first major shock with the Sino-Indian crisis and conflict. We had to turn to the western bloc for military support and, for the first time, accept arms on credit (as distinct from cash payments) from members of the western alliance. Even though the Sino-Soviet differences were already under way, the Soviet Union remained neutral to our security concerns. It came as a further shock that our non-aligned partners remained aloof from or non-partisan in the massive attack by China.

The second shock, long feared in India, was the Indo-Pak war of 1965 and the use of U.S. arms against India. But the 1965 war brought home to the United States that the intrusion and the imposition of the cold war stratagem in the sub-continent had only culminated in a conflict which did not suit its international purposes and only endangered the stability and progress of the sub-continent.

After the 1965 conflict, the West all but gave up the pretensions that it had any role in resolving Indo-Pak

problems. The efforts made bilaterally and through the United Nations to find a solution of the Kashmir dispute or of militarily balancing Pakistan with India had failed. China's attempt to help Pakistan indirectly through propaganda and ultimata to immobilise Indian forces made no difference to the end result of the war. After 1965 the West stopped military aid commitments to both countries. What is more important, it almost encouraged the U.S.S.R. to move into the position of mediator between Pakistan and India.

In 1971 (in the momentum of cultivating China for a new strategic balance) there was, for a few months, a throw back to the earlier western policy. To serve its own perceived goals, the United States, by diplomatic pressure and threats of intervention, sought to save undivided Pakistan and frustrate Bangladesh in its liberation struggle. The attempted coercion not only failed but left a lasting shadow on U.S.-India relations. But after 1971, relations between the great powers, or the big cold war, ceased to be the determinant of regional politics.

1971 was a turning point in the post-war history of the sub-continent. It finally exposed the folly and fallacy of Partition. Religion by itself did not prove a strong enough cementing force for national identity when geography, culture, ethnicity militated against it. The variant of gunboat diplomacy exposed the powerlessness of great powers in regional affairs. As everywhere else, nationalism in the sub-continent had become the most potent driving force in decision making. India had emerged as the dominant power in the region.

The problem for India's foreign policy thereafter has been to find the equation between its own strength and the nationalistic sensitivities of its smaller neighbours. The position of India in the region in effect became the mirror image of the problem of the U.S. in relationship with the world. They both became foils to the nationalisms of the weaker nations: they were perceived as a threat and yet looked

upon for benign understanding and economic support.

The problem was not easy. The natural economic and cultural unity of the sub-continent had been obscured by political fragmentation and bedevilled by the previous decades' intrusion of the cold war. Not just Pakistan, but the nationalism of our neighbours jibbed at the emerging outclassed strength of India. The assertion of India's pre-eminent position and the talk of a North American solution—of one powerful country dominating the security orientation and economic direction of the whole continent—only made the other countries more sensitive and more agile in demonstrating their independence.

Pakistan's nervousness about its identity had been aggravated by the humiliation of defeat and the loss of its eastern wing. Sri Lanka had already taken a neutralist stand, both in the Sino-Indian conflict and the Indo-Pak wars. It had even provided transit facilities to Pakistan's aircraft to by-pass the ban on over flights across India. Bangladesh nationalists did not take long to turn from a sense of gratitude to India to underlining their separate interests. Even under Mujib, Bangladesh showed reluctance to an equitable sharing of the Ganga waters at Farakka.

In the mid-1970s Nepal was to go further than it had done in the previous decade in equating and equidistancing itself between its two large neighbours. Departing from the spirit of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950, it proposed that both China and India should pledge to respect Nepal as a zone of peace.

Bhutan's international personality had been established through the energetic efforts of India: even though initially it had met with reluctance and opposition from most powers. Bhutan now sought to demonstrate its own diplomatic, commercial and even developmental independence from India. The integration of Sikkim aroused fears and accentuated the reservations towards India in Nepal and even Bhutan. Paradoxically, the result of India's emergence to unquestioned

pre-eminence led to the growth of a community interest between 'all' of India's neighbours with no stronger rationale than their separate proximity to India.

The challenge was great but so was the opportunity. The mischief of the cold war in the sub-continental relationships had greatly eased even if it had not been completely eliminated. After Nixon's visit to Moscow, the relations between the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. had created a climate of detente and, correspondingly, the strategic manoeuvres in South and South-East Asia had been muted.

However, after the Simla talks, which unscrambled the effects of the 1971 conflicts, there was no positive improvement in the climate of relations in the sub-continent. The intellectual hypnosis from the earlier decades was slow to recognise the new reality. Old fears about the U.S. attitude to India turned to exaggerated suspicions that the U.S.-China normalisation would become an alliance and both would join to militarise and again encourage Pakistan's revanchist ambitions. The possibility of cash sales of a few subsonic aircraft to replace the obsolescent F-84s, given under military aid to Pakistan in the fifties, revived memories of U.S. partisanship and malevolence towards India.

It was only five years after the end of the Bangladesh conflict, in 1976, that a process began to remould the pattern of relationship in and around the region. To begin with, China came to recognise that its anti-India and pro-Pak bias had neither saved Pakistan from dismemberment nor prevented India from emerging as the significant economic and military power in this part of Asia. While preserving its relations with Pakistan and still suspicious of Indo-Soviet relations, China came to hope that India would not, after all, just be a docile camp follower of the Soviet Union. In April 1976 China agreed to the restoration of Ambassadorial level relations with India and switched from the old policy of sustained, even if indirect hostility,

to soft diplomacy to cultivate India.

Soon afterwards, Pakistan, under the direction of Prime Minister Bhutto, finally decided to withdraw its long pending complaint with the International Civil Aviation Organisation for monetary compensation for the interruption of PIA flights between the two wings of Pakistan. This facilitated the restoration of diplomatic relations as well as bilateral communications, travel and trade links which had remained severed for 11 years. Pakistan acted with zest and ingenuity when a group from Kashmir hijacked an IAC plane to Lahore. Based on entrenched suspicions, there were those who instinctively presumed that, as in 1971, Pakistan must be behind the hijacking but these fears proved false. The hijackers were overpowered by Pakistan's officially directed efforts and the passengers as well as the aircraft were returned to India.

The negotiations under the Indus Treaty on the Salal Dam — which had gone on infructuously for nearly 7 years and were on the point of being consigned to international arbitration and become a potential second Kashmir — were resolved in October 1976. Even the Farakka negotiations which had aroused nation-wide protest in Bangladesh were discussed and, at least, the differences were narrowed. Bangladesh agreed to withdraw the item from the General Assembly Agenda and to explore a solution through bilateral negotiations.

The point to notice was that the initiative in all this had come from the region. There was a retreat from recourse to international pressures and mediation and there was no impediment from the outside powers to bilateralism. In fact there were definite indications that all great powers welcomed the process of sub-continental normalisation.

However, the process got suspended for the duration of the Indian general elections in 1977 which, as it happened, coincided closely with the elections in Pakistan. The re-

markable thing about both elections was that foreign policy was not allowed to become a campaign issue. Bhutto, in his attempt to over-insure his expected triumph had, in fact, planned two white papers — one on Kashmir and the second on Indo-Pak relations — to prove his personal record of patriotic vigilance. But when India did not react with the customary retaliatory propaganda, he decided not to play the well-worn anti-India card, even for domestic purposes.

When the Janata Government assumed office, unlike on the domestic front, in foreign policy it sought to underline a commitment to continuity. The meeting of the Non-aligned Bureau just 10 days after it assumed office enabled the new government to affirm fidelity to traditional Indian commitments. Gromyko's prompt visit to Delhi led to a mutual re-assurance on Indo-Soviet relations. This was confirmed with no apparent reservations in the visits of the Indian Prime Minister to Moscow in October 1977 and June 1979 and that of the Soviet Prime Minister to Delhi in March 1979. Even the differences of policy on Kampuchea did not detract from the freely expressed satisfaction at Indo-Soviet friendship and the further development of bilateral relations between the two countries.

The easing of border tension and the short term agreement on Farakka removed the politically explosive irritants in Indo-Bangladesh relations. The 1978 Treaty of Trade and Transit and the Agreement on control of illegal trade with Nepal gave a new warmth to the bilateral relations and the hopes of quicker progress on mutually beneficial hydel projects on the Nepalese rivers. The relations with Pakistan were not adversely affected even in the wake of the Sour revolution in Afghanistan. The Pakhtoonistan issue was revived but India remained detached and did not try to exploit it.

Incidentally, the definitive improvement in Indo-Pak relations removed an old complication in India's relations with the countries

of West Asia. Similarly, ASEAN countries agreed to open a dialogue with India and this held promise that, at long last, there might be improved multilateral relations with economically vibrant South-East Asia. The one major problem for India in 1979 when the Janata Government fell was with the USA. No compromise was reached on the supply of fuel for Tarapur after the United States sought unilaterally to modify its commitment to India by a domestic legislation. But even this specific problem did not prevent an improvement in the climate of relations with the United States.

In the years 1976-79, the foreign policy thrust was on resolving old problems, arresting militarisation and fashioning, bilaterally and multilaterally, a framework for stability and regional cooperation in the subcontinent. It was the beginning of the recognition that this could only be done by paying heed to the sensitivities of the constituent member nations within the region. The period straddled the tenure of two governments but both governments had shifted the priority to good neighbourly relations and beneficial bilateralism with the competing super powers.

The process which was under way, even if the potential was largely unrealised, received a setback because of domestic political upheavals. The interim Lok Dal Government never settled down to any coherent interest in international relations. Unlike the 1977 elections, foreign policy issues came to figure prominently in the election campaign at the end of 1979. The Janata party and the Congress sought to score points against each other without heeding the evident continuity and consensus on national interest in relationship with the region or the super powers.

The Janata Government was accused by the Congress of distorting non-alignment and giving it a pro-West tilt. The success in good neighbourly polity in the subcontinent was castigated as involving the sacrifice of national interest and allowing even the weakest of the neighbours to bully India. The

demand for the recognition of the Heng Samarin Government in Kampuchea was written into the election manifesto of the Congress party even though non-recognition had in no way damaged Soviet relations or been seriously misunderstood by Vietnam.

Then occurred one of those unfortunate coincidences which add unexpected complications to international relations. The Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan scarcely a week before the polling day and the debate on Afghanistan in the U.N. General Assembly started almost simultaneously with the swearing-in of the new government. The speech of the Indian ambassador to the U.N. was apparently approved in Delhi, but it would not be far-fetched to speculate that an assessment of the chronology, the confidential background and implications of the Afghan developments may, by then, not have been weighed at the highest level.

The reaction of the world, including an overwhelming majority of the non-aligned and more particularly all of India's neighbours, seems to have been erroneously anticipated. Soviet intervention in a non-aligned country — the first of its kind — was overwhelmingly condemned and the Indian position was interpreted as an extenuation, if not defence of the invasion. The international critics alleged that India's position proved it to be a dutiful supporter of Soviet policies rather than of a custodian of non-aligned principles. Privately, if not publicly, it was argued in some neighbouring countries that the Indian position on the Soviet action amounted to creating legitimacy for the right of powerful nations to pre-emptive intervention in smaller neighbours.

The fear was only revived when, non-officially, the notion that India must be accepted as the dominant power and mentor of the subcontinent was refurbished. In Nepal, with its sensitive antenna to Indian domestic politics, some India-baiters played on the apprehensions of being Sikkimised. In Bangladesh strong nationalistic feelings were aroused on the problem of Farakka

and the new dispute on Moore Island. The subsequent Indian recognition of Vietnam's military intervention in Kampuchea — again with all of India's neighbours taking a different position — compounded these distortions. Incidentally, as a consequence, it caused a setback to the prospect of a dialogue with China and with the ASEAN.

These exaggerated fears and the distorted interpretations played into the hands of Pakistan. In 1979, Pakistan stood alienated from international sympathy including from the West. The smothering of democracy and the return of martial law in 1977 had been bad enough but the execution of Z.A. Bhutto was universally condemned. U.S.-Pak relations were at their lowest ebb especially after the U.S. Embassy had been burnt and its diplomatic personnel brutally maltreated.

However, with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the feared threat across the Khyber and its apparent condoning by India, the prevailing prejudice against Pakistan was quickly dissipated. In Western and Islamic eyes Pakistan became the front-line State at a time when the West and even the Arabs were nervous about the security of the Gulf and the oil flows to the industrialised West. Even so, the arms and economic aid offer by the Carter Administration to Pakistan was a minimal one which President Zia himself denounced as peanuts. In India, however, the mention of western arms sale again evoked the *deja vu* scenario of the fifties and the naive American policies of 1964-65 which encouraged Pakistan's bellicosity against India. Rooted fears rather than informed judgments fuelled populist alarm.

Is it too speculative to contend that but for the election campaign and its momentum, our reactions might have been more sober and our diplomacy more energetic and astute? Pakistan should not have been allowed to run away with the claim that its security was being threatened on both its fronts. If the same government had been in power since 1977 or had the Janata Government continued till 1982, (and but for the

coincidence of the Indian election with the Soviet action), the Afghan crisis might have been used to activate rather than retreat on subcontinental cohesion and cooperation. It could have been seen as an opportunity to rationalise Indo-Pak relations which could not be done at the time of the Simla talks.

What was required on the Indian side was anticipating Pakistan (and world) reactions to the defensive, even if mis-perceived, Soviet intervention. A quick initiative could have been taken to prevent the revival of the regional arms race and the intrusion of strategic globalism from the West. It could have been asserted that the U.S.S.R. was not advancing to capture or control the Gulf. The crisis in the U.S.S.R.-Hafizullah Amin relations which precipitated the subsequent intervention, pre-dated the taking of U.S. hostages in Iran.

On the other hand, it could have been publicly stated that the Soviet Union must, in accordance with its own oft-professed principles, retreat from its intervention in a scrupulously non-aligned country and withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. Indo-Soviet relations, tested by time and reinforced by mutuality, would not have suffered serious or long-term damage. But even if the Soviet Union did not act on India's well-intentioned advice, the adverse train of consequences for South Asia would have been minimised if not avoided. In fact, India placed itself at a disadvantage in the search for a political solution which could assure the Soviet Union of its security and restore Afghanistan to meaningful stability and independence.

It is true that the time span for such an overture to Pakistan, and the attempt to preserve the fragile hopes of regional cohesion around non-alignment, was very short. The only hope was if an Indian initiative centred around the region and calculated to preserve non-alignment had been announced between the 9th of January and before the 26th of January 1980, when the Islamic conference met in Islamabad and reacted collectively to the developments in Afghanistan.

The conference took an unrealistically strong line against the Soviet Union. It was followed soon afterwards by the visit of Lord Carrington to India and Pakistan in the hope of a joint reaction from the subcontinent. The Carter administration in a hurried and alarmist reaction, announced—without consulting the States concerned—a commitment to extend a new U.S. military umbrella over the Gulf region and authorised the constitution of the Rapid Deployment Force. The U.S. also decided in principle to provide assistance to the Afghan insurgents.

In sum, the election process, the teething pre-occupation of the new government, came in the way of a well considered assessment and timely initiative. The result was that it triggered a new phase in the subcontinental arms race, inflicting incalculable economic opportunity costs for both Pakistan and India.

The new government in India with its decisive strength was, in fact, well placed to prevent the induction of sophisticated weaponry in the subcontinent. Outside opinion generally tends to believe that the new twist to the subcontinental arms race started with the Janata Government decision to buy 150 subsonic low flying Jaguar strike aircraft (in effect bombers) which could only be used against Pakistan. Before 1977, Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister had for years resisted the acquisition of the Jaguars and other expensive weapons systems. This was part of the fiscal policies to control inflation after the first oil shock.

This restraint in getting sophisticated aircraft had frustrated Pak's attempt to acquire the American A-7. If in the wake of Afghan developments, the new government had reaffirmed the need for a similar restraint, it might have assuaged Pakistan on the fear of a two-front military pressure. But even if it did not, there might have been a more cautious approach by the U.S. and the West not to precipitate an arms-race within the subcontinent. It was the momentum of the elections which came in the way of recalling

the earlier approach and active prophylactic diplomacy to arrest destabilisation in the region.

In retrospect, the policy of the Carter administration, though unnecessarily alarmist at Soviet intervention was, comparatively speaking, restrained in providing military hardware to Pakistan. The 400 million dollar package of arms and economic aid for Pakistan was truly peanuts compared to what was to follow in 1981. Notwithstanding the bilateral complications between India and the United States on Tarapur fuel and his non-proliferation goals, President Carter was as mindful of and sympathetic towards democratic India as any previous U.S. administration. The remaining year of the Carter administration would have been used to limit the arms race in the subcontinent and to prevent the general deterioration of relations with the U.S.

By the end of 1980, the US was also caught in a Presidential election and competitive populism. Carter himself had to turn hawkish and retreat from SALT-II and the pledge of a negotiated detente with the U.S.S.R. The Reagan campaign was stridently anti-Soviet and recalled the Dulles rhetoric. When it got elected, the new administration came in with the mandate of building up an anti-Soviet military capability and challenging suspected Soviet threats and expansionism everywhere.

In this approach, Pakistan was seen by Reagan's politico-strategic advisers as a lynch pin in the proposed policy, deserving full military and economic support, regardless of its undemocratic dispensation and overlooking the experience of the fifties. The Reagan military and economic aid package to Pakistan—almost 8 times the initial Carter proposals—was a predictable manifestation of the new U.S. policies. This in turn led to a bigger and more urgent programme of arms acquisition by India — Mirage 2000, more sophisticated Migs, more numerous heavy battle tanks, strengthening offensive capability of the navy with Sea Harriers, etc..

The estimated bill on the Indian economy is reported to be of the order of 8-10 billion dollars. The new arms build-up went hand in hand with talk of an impending Indo-Pak war.

In a sense, those in India who in 1980 exaggerated Pakistan's military capability and ambitions and its suspected foreign policy panache, prepared the ground for the Reagan administration's military aid to Pakistan. The hawks in India, many with a strong anti-American bias, played into the hands of the militant anti-Soviet hawks in the United States. It was similar to what happened throughout the cold war, when opposing paranoia became mutually enforcing and created self-fulfilling nightmarish scenarios. The result was that the subcontinent again got enmeshed with global strategies.

The Reagan approach was predictable but, with better assessment and prompt initiative, the damage could have been greatly limited and globalism could have been kept at bay. The support for Pakistan to replace its obsolescent fighter aircraft and improve its defensive capability like installing radar on its north-western front could not perhaps have been wholly avoided. (This would have been like improving our defensive capability on the northern front after the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962).

However, the induction of sophisticated offensive aircraft like the F-16 might have been averted. The interpretation of the developments in Afghanistan, as advanced in the West, has by now proved misconceived but the damage to the subcontinent's economies cannot be undone. It would be seen that the democratic process in India and the United States has contributed greatly in inflicting a serious setback, and an avoidable one, to the creeping process of subcontinental regionalism which was previously under way.

As stated earlier, the foreign policy hypothesis behind the Reagan approach has met with resistance around the world. Western allies

are not prepared to go along with sharp increases in military expenditure at the cost of domestic economic priorities. Strong mass movements, perhaps bigger and longer lasting than against the Vietnam war, are challenging Reagan's economic and nuclear deployment policies, both in Europe and the United States. The 'strategic consensus' around South-West Asia has found no positive regional response and the RDF has not secured any pre-determined local landing sites. The fact of the matter is that the world at large is progressively distancing itself from global militaristic strategies of the super powers.

In the subcontinent also, from the middle of 1981 and during 1982, the regional realities are thwarting the consequences of super power globalism. In both Pakistan and India there is a new awareness, official and public, of the critical importance of relations with each other. The thrust of the visit of Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao to Pakistan in June 1981, specially as enunciated in his Karachi address, was a far cry from the mutual suspicions and the fears of conflict which prevailed in 1980 in the wake of the post-Afghanistan super power tensions. Pakistan made a significant reversal of its earlier stand in offering an unconditional No-War declaration to India. So far this offer, as also the counter one by India of a Treaty of Peace and Friendship, are relegated by mutual suspicion to exercises in public relations.

The current Indian position on Afghanistan — that a political solution must aim at Soviet withdrawal — is also a modification of the stand taken in January 1980. After the visit of Gen. Ershad of Bangladesh in October 1982, the short term agreement on the allocation of water from Farakka was extended for 18 months on the same basis as negotiated by the Janata Government. Gen. Ziaur-Haq of Pakistan and Mrs. Gandhi, during the former's stopover in Delhi in November 1982, reached an agreement to constitute a Joint Commission. They also affirmed the commitment to improve the climate of

relations between Pakistan and India. Overall, there is widespread recognition that improvement of relations with neighbours is more important than dependence on and diplomacy with the great powers.

In 1982, the tilt and suspicions towards one or the other super power is also being corrected. Mrs. Gandhi's visit to the U.S.A. repaired the damage done to relations with the U.S. in 1980-81. We have seldom made such a strong effort to cultivate any country prior to, and during an official visit. The result went beyond highlighting the democratic similarities between the two countries. It underlined the potential importance of technical, financial and commercial cooperation in Indo-U.S. relations.

We are back at the position that there is complementarity of interest, even if there is no identity of views between the U.S. and India and that relations with one super power do not exclude them with the other. Indeed, there was even an implicit recognition that Pakistan had a right to modernise its defensive capability in cooperation with its friends. Neither arms for Pakistan nor Diego Garcia were allowed to impede the positive thrust of the Prime Minister's visit to the U.S.A.

The subsequent visit of the Prime Minister to the U.S.S.R. did not require any damage-repairing operations. The democratic process and even changes in government had never come in the way of steadily developing Indo-Soviet bilateral relations. The U.S.S.R. had come to be accepted as a dependable friend on international problems and as a partner for planned development at home.

Mrs. Gandhi's visits to France, U.K., Japan and Saudi Arabia have also been notable successes in raising relations of beneficial commercial and financial collaborations and incidentally in diversifying our arms supply relationships. The dialogue with China which was interrupted in 1980, was resumed in 1981. In sum, the trend of foreign policies has come back to the

mainstream which had begun in the 70s when the region held the priority, and parallel relations were envisaged with the super powers without banking on using East/West competition as a leverage for national advantage.

While the distortions which came in the wake of the democratic electoral process are being corrected, the legacy of the oscillations remain with us. The prospect of supersophisticated offensive arms in the subcontinent has inevitably increased tensions and mutual fears. The defence budgets of both India and Pakistan have made quantum jumps and will strain their balance of payments at a time of shrinking international trade. The sixth plan in India has had to be emasculated at a time when socio-political problems are on the increase and there is a crisis of domestic resources. The subcontinent is moving very sluggishly towards regionalism because of the revived tensions and suspicions of 1980. The meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of South Asia has so far lacked the underpinnings of political will to move rapidly enough to catch up with the progress of regionalism elsewhere.

In the quadrilateral of the United States, the Soviet Union, India and Pakistan, all the relations are still riddled with apprehensions and ambivalence. The U.S. still hopes that Pakistan will remain a dependable bastion of western strategy to contain the Soviet Union; the Soviet Union hopes that Pakistan can be weaned away from supporting the Afghan rebels and prevented from becoming a surrogate of the U.S.A. or China. Even if it has assured the Soviet Union that it will not be party to any anti-Soviet strategy, Pakistan still apprehends that, between the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and Soviet treaty relations with India, it may be squeezed to destruction in a pincer. India suspects that U.S. military aid to Pakistan may again lead to Pakistan's belligerence against India. There are also deeply held fears of a pre-emptive strike by Pakistan or India on the nuclear installation of the other.

Even though both super powers have similar goals to prevent the nuclearisation of the subcontinent, they are helpless to reverse the present dangers. Both India and Pakistan are uncertain whether the particular super power with whom they have treaty relations or an agreement would stand by them militarily in the event of a regional conflict. Besides, the process of normalisation of Sino-Indian relations has slowed down, not simply because of the boundary question, but because of revived suspicions that on Afghanistan and Kampuchea, India was taking a pro-Soviet rather than a non-aligned stance. All told, there is neither full candour nor real confidence in any of the bilateral relationships.

To piece together a conceptual framework which is contemporaneously valid, we must revert to a recognition that the destiny of the sub-continent rests primarily in the success or failure of sub-continental diplomacy. Nehru's vision of the World Order has been vindicated. Long ago he had prophesied that the super powers could not ensure security if all nations were going to be fitted into their globalism. Outside powers have complicated regional problems but not resolved them. After 1971 and more so since 1976 (except for a short time in 1980-81), the super powers have been either subsidiary factors or indifferent to regional problems. We have not sufficiently noticed that the politics of their strategic globalism including their revived cold war have been exercises in diplomatic failure. Outside powers can at best be used to develop appropriate economic complementarities.

The lesson is also clear that no super power can be actually dragged in against the other in a purely regional conflict. Under these restraints and limitations, the outside powers will acquiesce, or at least cannot obstruct, constructive resolutions within a region which is non-aligned and non-partisan in global militarism. Indeed, in the post-cold war multi-polarity, both super powers may welcome such development as it can save the hazards of a nuclear war or expose them as unreliable friends.

In framing a valid policy, the broad answer is to see the sub-continent as a microcosm of world politics. Our vision of enlightened internationalism in the world context provides the recipe for the regional polity also. As with the North/South problem, the lodestar has to be survival and progress in a politically differentiated but economically and ecologically interdependent geographical entity. The arguments rest on the fundamental of the philosophy of non-alignment — of diverting resources from excessive militarisation towards development and socio-economic progress.

The axiom of the French author, Seay, quoted by Stanley Hoffman in *Duties Beyond Borders* has a universal validity. 'A wise nation fosters with all its might the progress of its neighbours.' This is what we demand of the United States (and the affluent nations) in its relations with the developing world. This is the challenge for India in its relations within the subcontinent. While political partitions cannot be undone, paranoia and suspicions can be assuaged. On the basis of experience, we should aim at progressively delinking the cold war from the politics of the subcontinent and vigorously pursue the goal of economic regionalism.

The search for economic regionalism demands that bilateral relations with a non-regional power would not be directed against another country of the region. Pakistan, after its own experience of the last three decades, must give up wanting to develop a military capability vis-a-vis India by exploiting the cold war. But, first and last, the challenge is for India to find the alchemy of trust with its small and sensitive neighbours. The basic tenet of our policy has been to demand an end to colonialism and unequal relations and to require respect for independence and responsible nationalism in the new international democracy. The challenge for us is also to demonstrate understanding for other nationalisms in the subcontinent as we demand it from the big powers.

From this analysis, starting with the decade and dwelling in more

detail over the last two years, emerge the following over simplified parameters of policy.

(i) Our primary foreign policy challenge is in the neighbourhood. Relations with the outside world—the great powers, the Islamic World, South East Asia—will become stable and less ambivalent with success in a good neighbourly policy. The resolution of Indo-Pak relations will release the kinetic energy of our diplomatic potential. What matters is success and not diplomacy of complaint and explanations.

(ii) The failure to obtain the trust of the neighbours—bilaterally with each but as part of a multilateral pattern enveloping the region — will not only perpetuate regional tensions but also continued international involvement repugnant to non-alignment and to our national destiny. Failure would add to our economic problems (consequently aggravate internal socio-economic ferment) and even more to the neighbours, problems at a time when the world economic situation is likely to be difficult if not grim for the Third World.

(iii) The test of whether we stand for nationalism and non-intervention will be judged by whether we can associate with, if not initiate, concrete steps to a political solution in Afghanistan. Such a solution must simultaneously safeguard Soviet security and restore Afghan nationalism to its homeland. A regional framework for such a solution could, incidentally, be a catalyst for Indo-Pak detente.

(iv) We have a stake in the stability, growth, progress and viability of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, as also Bhutan. They are part of the natural market for industrialised India and it follows that we have an interest in their economic growth and increased purchasing power. Our progress as well as theirs,

depends on riparian cooperation with our northern, western and eastern neighbours. Such beneficial cooperation must guard against the suspicions of political hegemonism. We cannot determine the internal dispensation in these countries. Indeed, such attempts everywhere have been counter-productive. But we can, by scrupulous restraint, help the countries to evolve politically and, by positive cooperation, facilitate their search for economic and independent viability.

What we cannot do is to stand for equality and disarmament in international democracy and yet be insensitive to nationalism in our own region, thus projecting an unequal relationship. India is important not just as an arms purchaser or as a market of 700 million people or because of its strategical location; it is critically important to the world economic and political order. We have unique strength and have achieved spectacular and rare progress in diversified economic and social development. We have indigenised democracy and lived through the process — as few other developing countries have — of changes in governments through a constitutionally prescribed provision. With this institutional stability, statesmanship can well demonstrate that, around the broad consensus on non-alignment, India can gear its foreign policy to consistency and continuity.

If we discard our intellectual obsessions of the past, the world situation, serious as it is, is not specially hostile to the subcontinent. Indeed, it is propitious for confident and purposeful diplomacy in the region. India's own potential in men and resources is immense. We must regain both faith and confidence that our long term national interests are in harmony with enlightened and principled internationalism. With the subcontinent free of political suspicions, India can truly emerge as a bridge in a divided world, and in quest of a world which is safe for diversity and equal dignity amongst nations.

Reflections on 1982

RAJINDER PURI

1982.

Some year, 1982. It was a year we might forget but perceptive historians would recall. Nothing happened but everything started to change. Is this wishful thinking? I don't think so. I can see the change as I encounter the bewildered, hurt look in the eyes of those who stood up for the rulers. The change must first occur of course where all things start in India: in the mind of the ruling class.

The ruling class is shaken. At least a section of it is. The Emergency changed little. The government was shown up for being merely wicked, you see. Not stupid and inefficient which it really was. People don't mind wickedness. There is a certain power and glamour about

wickedness. But stupidity ...? Weakness ...? Inefficiency ...? There is a frightening fallibility about these which pierces the subconscious like an arrow to leave pale faces and sick minds burdened by haunting fear. Yes, fear. I think that the small thinking section among Mrs Gandhi's admirers are beginning to get afraid. How's it all going to end after all?

("Ho-ho-ho, in India nothing changes, bhai! It's been like this for centuries and will continue for centuries! *Sab aisa hi chalta hai!*")

Comforting words, but they have ceased to comfort. The drunken spree of power excess and pomp in the palace grows more reckless by the hour. And the Queen herself? That imperious offspring of politi-

cal aristocracy, the Brown Sahib's dream girl, his credit card for London, Paris and New York — whatever happened to her? This tatty old ma-in-law, this embarrassing relic of Dalda royalty, Rajiv's mummy, was this what it was all about? True, the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* might still praise her. But even that magic has ceased to work. The gods of the big foreign press have failed. The Brown Sahib bitterly is beginning to suspect that in the best of papers abroad there must lurk a Khushwant Singh or a Girilal Jain. In the Brown Sahib's mind a small worm of doubt has grown. And the worm is beginning to turn.

The year began with stunning appropriateness. New Year's Eve, 1981, was celebrated by a programme on a national TV hook-up. It was a fitting foretaste of things to come. There, for the millions of Dhani Rams and Bhoop Singhs glued on to their sets in the small towns spread through the length and breadth of India was the unedifying spectacle of Vasant Sathe, Khushwant Singh, Balram Jhakar, Kiran Bedi and a gaggle of Delhi socialites, compered by Rani Dubey straight from the BBC back home, playing silly drawing room games appropriate for any birthday party organised by a Bunty or a Bubbles in a Jor Bagh or a Bandra flat. It was grotesque and horrible. The alienation of the rulers, their total immersion in a cuckooland of their own make-believe appeared to be complete.

And the year as it followed reinforced that first image with each event. It was on the whole a smooth year. All exposures and no upheavals. All eyes on the palace, all thoughts to themselves. And each drama enacted by the rulers confirmed an unspoken and painful truth. So that without fuss there occurred a startling change in the perception of people.

The change relates to people's assessment of Mrs Gandhi, who best personifies India's ruling class. People are beginning to realise that her convent school accent hides a mind no better than Bhajan Lal's. This is a particularly painful pill to

swallow for the army of bureaucrats, journalists and business executives who have class empathy with Mrs Gandhi, seeing in her not only their hope but their reassurance. She was their affirmation of class superiority. Not any more. Never mind the corruption and pseudo-tyranny. It is the plain incompetence and lack of perspective which jar.

It has emboldened the *desi* yokels too. Bhajan Lal is reported to have said with contempt: 'If I had known how corrupt they are at number one Safdarjang Road I would have become a chief minister years earlier.' Contrast this with poor Kamaraj years ago. I never failed to discern in him awe for the members of the anglicised Kashmiri Brahmin ruling family. The toddy-tapper's son had too little familiarity with the palace to acquire that robust contempt which permeates the mind of each money-grabbing rogue parading as chief minister today.

Two factors helped create this impression in 1982. They were Antulay and Maneka. I'm not talking about Antulay's corruption. I'm referring to his cynical and brazen defiance. The court scored a technical victory against Antulay. Mrs Gandhi was helpless. I think none exposed her weakness and vacillation as did Antulay. He virtually paralysed her. And one fact stuck in the public's gullet. Antulay with his money easily held at bay Mrs Gandhi with her's. So it was only money power which worked with the MLAs, after all. Where was Mrs Gandhi's magic?

In the crowds that she pulled? Well, Maneka pricked that bubble. I can only laugh to myself as intellectuals fumble and grope around for a satisfactory answer to why Maneka of all people, itty-bitty little Maneka, should pull all the crowds. It must be the magic of the Nehru name, people mumble, shaking their heads. The professional political workers know better. And by now they are legion. They are a huge mercenary army on the lookout for spoils. They know the personal and political uses of money. Oh yes, there's the whale of a difference between a good leader and bad

leader, but without money you're no leader.

That much abused word 'charisma' is beginning to sound more and more awkward. Indira Gandhi had charisma. Sanjay Gandhi had charisma. Now Rajiv and Maneka have charisma. And all these charismatic leaders spend money like drunken sailors. This truth has got firmly embedded in the consciousness of political workers: any leader can enter the game if he has the money. It is a shattering indictment of our present system. Political workers have the utmost respect for good leaders. But they follow only the rich leaders. They have to live. And in any case how can politics get off the ground without adequate money? They aren't out to make revolutions, only political parties and electoral movements.

Now the money stakes have risen so high that only a revolution or a great movement or a great disaster can stop the power of the paisa. In the recent Nagaland election, Rs 15 lakhs each were spent on several constituencies by the Congress(I). After the Haryana poll one shudders to think how much a parliamentary seat will cost for any credible candidate in the next general election. The success of Rajiv and Maneka has exposed with startling clarity what many knew but could never convincingly communicate. And this is not a new phenomenon. It is only the rapid escalation of money utilisation that has brought cracks in the system. Money power was rampant even in Nehru's days. But who believed Lohia? And it is not money power flowing from legitimate vested interests. It's all quid pro quo for corruption.

Even the much vaunted electoral pull of Mrs Gandhi, which editorial writers never tire of pointing at, is a myth. Any assessment of the voting figures would prove that. Even the Haryana and Himachal polls in '82 proved that. Most of all, Bahuguna in '82 proved that. Bahuguna did not lack money for his election. How far ahead in technique he was compared to Mrs Gandhi! She addressed 32 speeches in his constituency. She tried all the crookedness and coercion that a corrupt government could. In the end,

Bahuguna trounced her. So who had the charisma?

Right now elections don't seem very important. The system is on trial. And 1982 did little to kindle hope of a happy verdict. For close on a year, the Bombay textile workers have been on strike, crippling an entire industry. There have been drought deaths in U.P., Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The Akalis have been on the warpath in Punjab. The students have paralysed the administration in Assam for years. There is no administration in any of the Congress(I) ruled States. There is dissidence threatening to become a revolt in each.

And in the midst of all this the government, having taken a 5000 crore IMF loan, is busy trying to impress its donors abroad that India is ready to take off. There are deals, deals, deals. There is also high priced PR at work. And the foreign correspondents help. Often there are nice write-ups abroad. But how can the nicest write-ups hide the Rs 17000 crores plus foreign trade gap which will confront us early next year? How will write-ups obscure the tatters to which the sixth five year plan has been reduced?

The government's own figures are stunning. According to the sixth plan documents, the number of persons below the poverty line rose from 177 million in 1950-51 to 311 million in 1978-79. A little less than half our total population is below the poverty line. The combined income of the country's poorer half is less than the combined income of the country's most affluent five per cent.

Not only this. The poor are getting poorer. According to sixth plan documents, in 1961, 30 per cent of the households had assets valued at less than Rs 1000. By 1971 the number of such households had risen to 35 per cent, and it steadily continues to rise. The Debt and Investment Survey of the Reserve Bank of India shows that more than one-third of the population in India is poorer today than it was ten years earlier. One need not go on. Is the Reserve Bank telling the truth? Is the sixth plan telling the truth? Perhaps both are lying,

Perhaps only Asiad told the truth. The *New York Times* said it was a great political victory for Mrs Gandhi. It cost only 1700 to 2000 crores. It put India on the world map. Not her athletes unfortunately. We play the game in the spirit of the game, old chap. Not like the crude Chinese. Already hustling to win the 1992 Olympiad. Most Indians, and when I say Indians I mean the real flesh and blood people who live in India, the people you actually meet in the House of Ming (or is it Ping?) in the Taj Hotel, not the little digits crowded on the dusty pages of the sixth plan documents, whom we never get to see as people anyway, and who if they exist never seem to get to Delhi anyway, well, as I was saying, most people of India think that the Asiad was fantastic. It proved that India can do it.

Now all that is required is for the capital to flow in instead of flowing out. And, oh yes, many more deals to be signed after they have been sagaciously vetted by Arunji and Dhawanji and Fotedarji and finally by Rajivji himself. After which it should be hunky dory. Technology will do the rest. Jeepers creepers, know what the Japs have done? Transistor colour TV sets hooked straight on to satellite with boosters, chum. Voice of America, BBC and all that jazz straight on your telly, know what I mean? It's the thing in Europe, man — should be here next year. Yes, progress seems easy. Technology, the new Merlin, will see to it. IMF, Rajiv and Buta have done the rest. So all aboard, ready to go.

I wonder what Rasputin's admirers were thinking when the revolution hit them. Anything like what Dhirendra Brahmachari's *chelas* think today? The poor sods won't know what's hit them if it ever hits them. But revolution is a far, far cry. 1982 merely created an environment, a mood. Beneath the euphoria there now linger fears and doubts. One setback, and traditional supporters of the rulers and the system will be jolted out of their wits. And then...?

We may look back and remember 1982.

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AND
LOW ALUMINIUM FERROSILICON
PRODUCED IN THEIR PLANT AT
VYASANKERE**

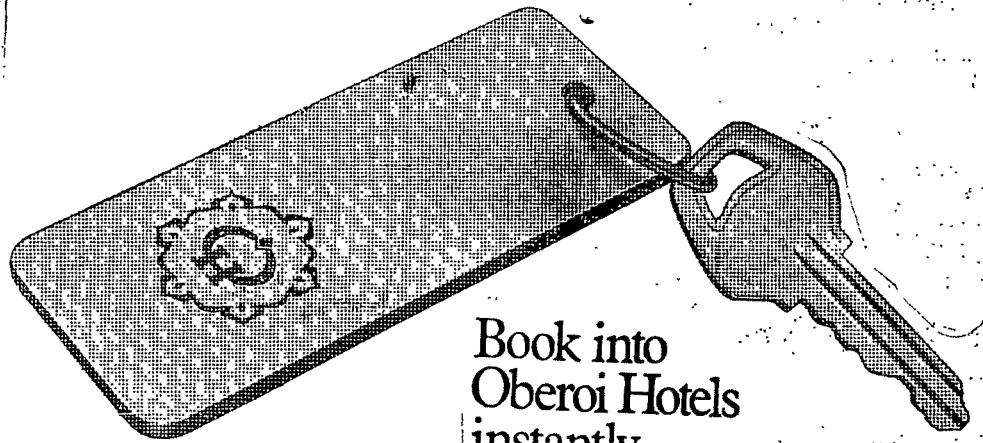
Please Contact
**THE SANDUR
MANGANESE & IRON
ORES LIMITED**

"LOHADRI BHAVAN"
Yeshwant Nagar-583124:
Via Sandur, Bellary Dt.
Karnataka INDIA

Cable : SMIORE, SANDUR (INDIA)
Telephone : SANDUR 33, 61, 91 :

Telex : BANGALORE 427
Bangalore : 32175 : 28262.

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isn't
within the reach
of only
a lucky few.**

**Most can
achieve it.**

VOLTAS



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**"Retirement meant
end of income, till
I found out about
UcoPlan"**

UcoPlan
A unique service to
help you earn more
than ever before

UCO/CRS/99181



I am happily retired because my accumulations are gainfully employed. Thanks to UCOPLAN —the free, financial advisory service, UCOPLAN matched my savings capacity to my goals and assured me maximum earnings. Security plus a monthly income

There's a UCOPLAN for your future too. Drop by any UCOBANK branch today and ask for details. UCOPLAN has a wide choice of lucrative ways to make your money work

Because you've spent your life working for it.



**United
Commercial Bank
the friendly bank
round the corner**

HINDUSTAN MOTORS LIMITED

Manufacturers of :

**Hindustan Ambassador Car, Truck, Trekker &
Heavy Earthmoving Equipment**



Registered Office at
9/1 R. N. MUKHERJEE ROAD, CALCUTTA-700 001

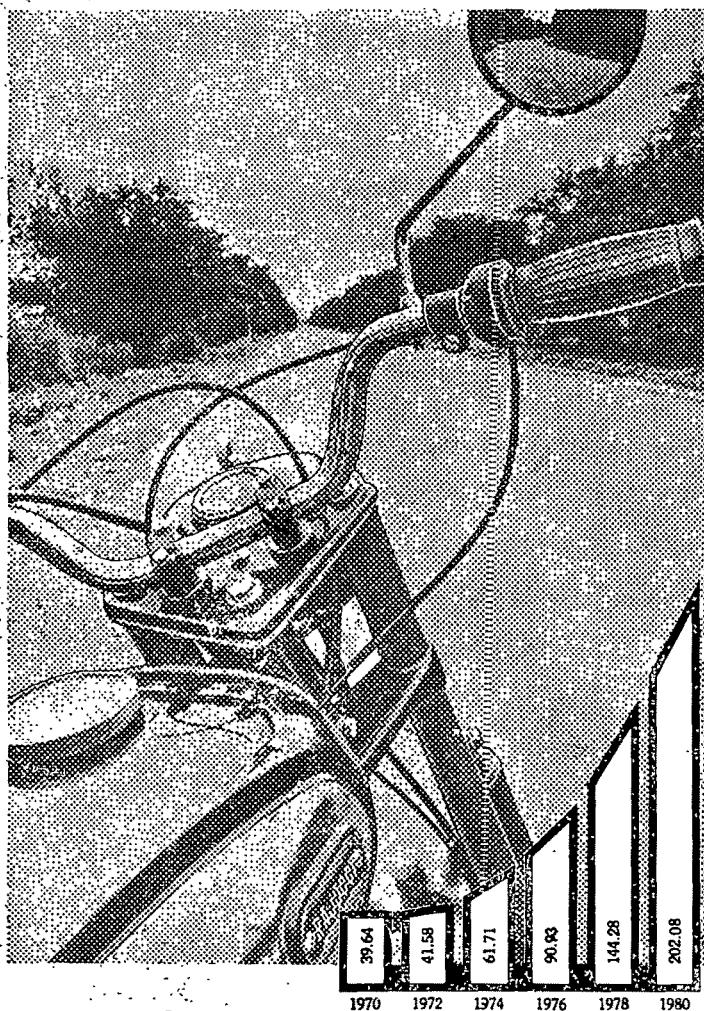


Factories at
HINDMOTOR (West Bengal) & TRIVELLORE (Tamil Nadu)

ESORTS STAYS AHEAD OF THE TIMES



**Adapting sophisticated technology to stretch
every litre into extra kilometres—ensuring
maximum performance while keeping fuel costs low.**



HTD/ESC-6059E

**Adapting advanced technology
relevant to India's core needs.**

ESORTS LIMITED

11 Scindia House, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110 001

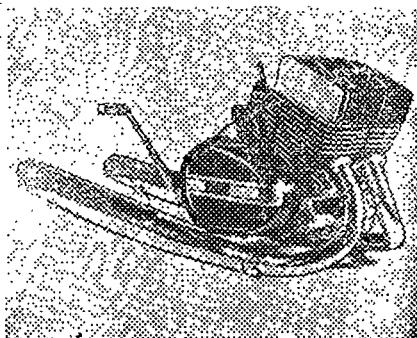
Escorts constantly anticipates change—and is geared to the challenges of the future.

As the market leader in motorcycles, Escorts has skilfully blended its experience of the changing Indian environment, with some of the latest technology available from Japan. And is quickly developing capability of producing a complete range of bi-wheelers up to 400 cc, technically superior to any other available in India.

This technology package includes the introduction of a whole range of the world's most sophisticated bi-wheeler ancillaries like super efficient carburettors, swaged spokes, clutch assemblies, electrics, safety features, etc., many of which are passed on to some of RAJDOOT's 500 ancillary suppliers.

The result is that Indian bi-wheeler riders will progressively get machines which, on the same consumption of fuel, will give far superior power, durability and performance.

Today, advanced carburettors which give much greater mileage and performance, are already in production by Escorts Employees' Ancillaries Limited, in collaboration with Mikuni of Japan—the world's leading manufacturer of carburettors.



India's first 2-stroke, 2-cylinder, 350 cc, 39 bhp engine to be manufactured by Escorts in technical collaboration with Yamaha of Japan.

Motorcycles • Tractors and Farm Equipment • Automotive Ancillaries • Industrial and Construction Equipment • Railway Ancillaries • Heating Elements

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**Regd Office:
Bombay House,
Homy Mody Street,
Bombay-400023**

NATIONAL TOBACCO COMPANY

A DIVISION OF DUNCANS AGRO INDUSTRIES LTD.



Tobacco House
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Once, the setting of a royal durbar. Today, an exclusive conference venue.

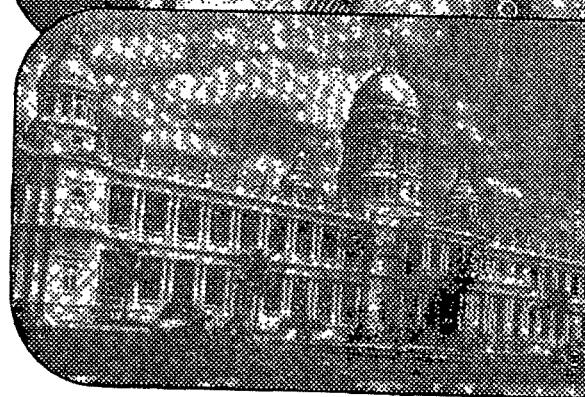
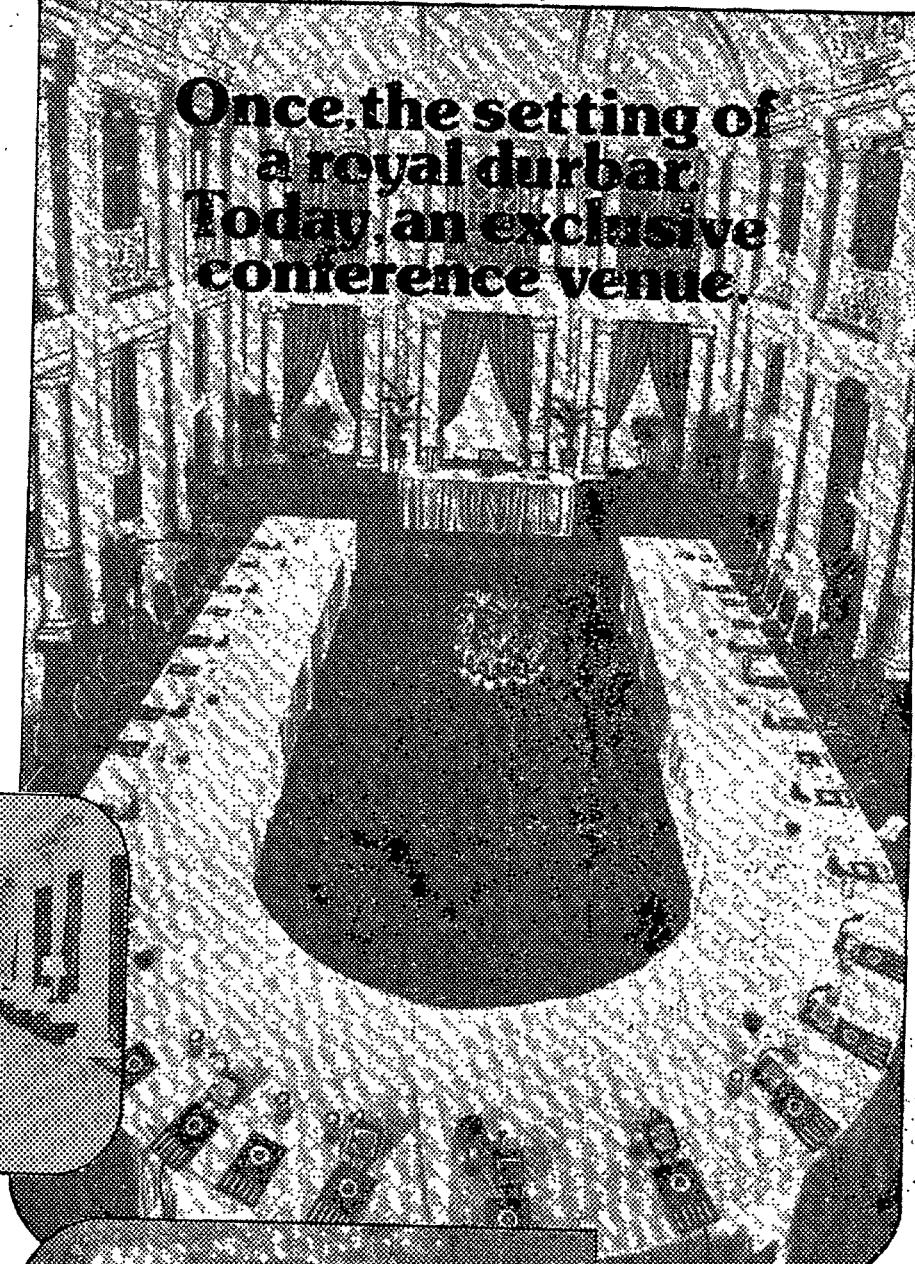


Think of it. Your next conference in a royal palace in Mysore. The city — an oasis of tranquillity, at the foot of the Chamundi Hills.

The palace — where lifestyle spells magnificence. Your conference has a splendid setting. A Conference Hall and a Banquet Hall, where the decor is richly royal. And with it, full facilities — secretarial services, audio-visual equipment, microphones *et al.*

How about a holiday? Bring your seminar or conference to Mysore and discover a fascinating city. With its palaces, serene boulevards and parks.

Go sight-seeing to the island fortress of Srirangapatna, the Brindavan Gardens, the temple architecture of Halebid and Belur.



The Chamundi Hills with the famous Nandi Bull or the Bandipur Wildlife Sanctuary.

The ideal business-holiday tie-up.

For information and reservations, contact:

The Manager
Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel
Mysore 570010 Karnataka
Tel 23650 Cables TOURISM
Telex 0846-217

Or

Ashok Reservation Service:

	Tel.	Cables	Telex
Delhi	350070	CENTRES	031-2468
Bombay	232722	TOURISM	011-4171
	233343		
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	89672		



Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel

Where conferring has never been more enjoyable!

India Tourism Development Corporation



Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited

(A fully-owned Government of India Undertaking)

Regd. Office: Hindustan Times House, 18-20 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110001

Fixed Deposit Scheme

Invites/renews deposits under the following Schemes subject to the terms and conditions indicated in the application form:

I. CUMULATIVE DEPOSIT SCHEME

Minimum amount of deposit	Amount repayable on maturity after three years	Minimum amount payable of deposit	Amount repayable on maturity after three years
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1,000	1,515	10,00,000	15,25,000

For every additional Rs. 1,000 deposited, Rs. 1,515 will be repaid on maturity.

Yearly interest under the Cumulative Deposit Scheme shall be calculated and compounded every year at the rate of 15% p.a. subject to adjustment of difference in amount at the time of maturity of deposit and subject to deduction of tax at source.

II. FIXED DEPOSIT SCHEME

Category	PERIOD & RATE OF SIMPLE INTEREST PER ANNUM		
	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Deposits from public	11.5%	12.5%	14%
Deposits from its employees ex-employees, widows of the deceased employees of the Company and recognised Charitable Trusts	12%	13%	14.5%

Deposits under the Fixed Deposit Scheme are acceptable in multiples of Rs.1,000 with a minimum of Rs. 1,000. Interest will be calculated on 30th September/31st March and will be paid half-yearly and on maturity. Where the amount of deposit is Rs. 1 lakh or more, interest will be paid for the period ending 30th June, 30th September, 31st December and 31st March. Interest will be paid through interest warrants cashable at par at all branches of State Bank of India in the country.

The Reserve Bank of India has accorded permission to the Company under the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act, 1973, to accept deposits from non-resident Indians and persons of Indian origin.

PARTICULARS AS PER THE COMPANIES (ACCEPTANCE OF DEPOSITS) RULES, 1975, AS AMENDED

- (a) Name of the Company: Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
- (b) Date of incorporation of the Company: 13th November, 1964
- (c) The business carried on by the Company with the details of branches and Units if any:—
The activities of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited cover design, development, manufacture, erection and commissioning of electricals, electronic and mechanical equipment required for generation, transmission, distribution and utilisation of all sources of energy and other industrial products required for various industrial applications.
The Company has its registered and corporate office at New Delhi and manufacturing divisions at Bangalore, Bhopal, Hardwar, Hyderabad, Jhansi, Ranipet and Tiruchirappalli, besides a number of Service Divisions located in different parts of the country and abroad.
- (d) Brief particulars of the Management of the Company:
The Company is managed by the Managing Director and whole-time Directors under the supervision, direction and control of the Board of Directors.

(e) NAMES, ADDRESSES AND OCCUPATIONS OF THE DIRECTORS:

Name	Occupation & Address
Shri K.L. Puri	Chairman & Managing Director Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited 18-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110 001
Shri H.M.S. Bhatnagar	Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser Ministry of Industry, Udyog Bhavan New Delhi-110 001
Shri M.C. Gupta	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industry (Department of Heavy Industry) Udyog Bhavan, New Delhi-110 001
Brig. Y. Nirula	Chairman & Managing Director Instrumentation Ltd, Kota (Rajasthan)
Shri A.K. Sah	Chairman & Managing Director National Thermal Power Corporation 62-69, NTPC Square Nehru Place, New Delhi-110 019
Shri R.N. Srivastava	Director (Personnel) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited 18-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110 001
Shri T.V. Balakrishnan	Director (R&D) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited Corporate Research & Development Vikas Nagar, Hyderabad-500 593
Shri B.S. Samat	Director (Thermal) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited 18-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110 001

(f) & (g) PROFITS & DIVIDENDS: (Rupees in crores)

Year ended	Profit before tax	Profit after tax	Dividend	Dividend % on capital
31st March	43.30	37.52	7.80	6%
1981	38.30	37.52	9.00	6%
1982	51.65	30.15	10.39	6%

(h) SUMMARISED FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COMPANY AS IN THE TWO LATEST AUDITED BALANCE SHEETS: (Rs. in crores)

	As on 31.3.82	As on 31.3.81	As on 31.3.82	As on 31.3.81
LIABILITIES			ASSETS	
Share Capital	173.21	150.00	Fixed Assets (net)	401.37
Reserves & Surplus	145.54	126.41	Investment	0.07
Secured Loans	199.32	151.95	Current Assets	1254.62
Unsecured Loans	408.05	329.31	Loans & Advances	91.80
Current Liabilities	821.74	668.92	Miscellaneous	109.00
and Provisions			Expenditure	Nil
			Profit & Loss	Nil

NOTE: Brief particulars of contingent liabilities: (Rs. in crores)

	As on 31.3.82	As on 31.3.81
Claims against Company not acknowledged as Debts	53.66	40.86
Bills discounted with banks	14.23	14.44
Counter Guarantees given for Bank Guarantees	180.92	191.35

(i) The amount which the Company can raise by way of deposit under the Companies (Acceptance of Deposits) Rules, 1975, as amended, i.e. 25% of the aggregate of the paid-up share capital and free reserves of the Company.

(ii) Deposits held as on 31.3.1982 (Deposits held as on date—Rs. 50 crores approx.):

(k) The Company has no overdue deposits other than unclaimed deposits.

(l) The Company hereby declares—

(i) That it has complied with the provisions of the Companies (Acceptance of Deposits) Rules, 1975, as amended:

(ii) That the compliance with these Rules does not imply that repayment of deposits is guaranteed by the Central Government; and

(iii) That the deposits accepted by the Company are unsecured and rank pari passu with other unsecured liabilities.

The text of the above advertisement has been approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on 30th September, 1982, and a copy thereof duly signed by a majority of the Directors on the Board of Directors of the Company, as constituted at the time the Board approved this advertisement, has been delivered to the Registrar of Companies, Delhi & Haryana, for registration. This advertisement is issued on the authority and in the name of the Board of Directors of the Company.

By Order of the Board of Directors
for BHARAT HEAVY ELECTRICALS LIMITED
Dated: 12.10.1982

M. Narayanaswami
Secretary,

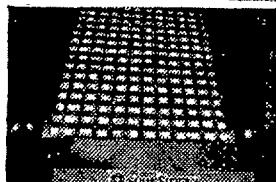
FOR ANY ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT:
BHEL Public Deposit Cell, Flat F, 6th Floor, Vandana Building,
Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi - 110 001 (Telephone: 40809)

Your investment and our success — they grow together.

The finest hotel chain in India...



The Taj Mahal Inter-Continental, Bombay
Combining old world panache with
20th century splendour. Quite simply,
like few others in the world.



Hotel President, Bombay
Situated close to the city's business,
shopping and entertainment area,
offering excellent service.



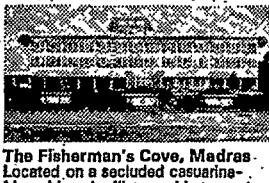
The Rambagh Palace, Jaipur
Created at the height of the
graciousness and splendour of Jaipur.
Now offered to you as a hotel.
A delicate fusion of the medieval and
the contemporary.



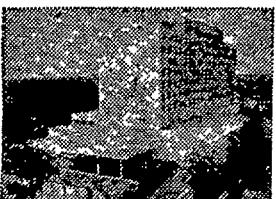
The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi
The latest addition to the Taj chain,
A splendid abode of grace, created to
accentuate the magnificence of India's
capital.



The Fort Aguada Beach Resort, Goa
Where a gentle sea beats...an old
Portuguese ruin presides over a
beautiful poem in brick and wood—
The Fort Aguada Beach Resort.



The Fisherman's Cove, Madras
Located on a secluded casuarina-
fringed beach...like a golden secret.
Just a 32 km drive from Madras.



Taj Coromandel Hotel, Madras
The finest hotel in Madras, mere
minutes from the city centre. A serene
reflection of the age-old Taj tradition.



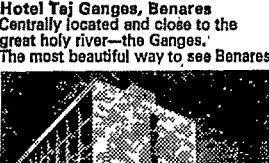
The Lake Palace, Udaipur
Once upon a time, the Rajas of Mewar
held court here. Now it is a unique
hotel. Complete with all manner of
20th century fittings and amenities.



Hotel Taj Ganges, Benares
Centrally located and close to the
great holy river—the Ganges.
The most beautiful way to see Benares.



The Taj Holiday Village, Goa
Adjacent to the Fort Aguada Beach
Resort. A variety of cottages
landscaped to create a typical
Goan environment.

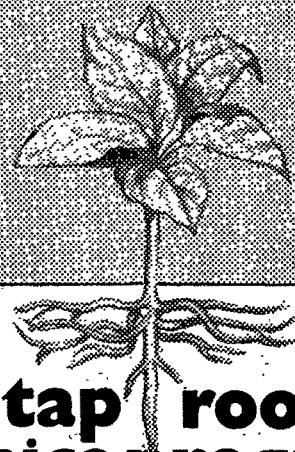


Pandyan Hotel, Madurai
In the heart of Madurai where
transcendent architecture and
sculpture are living monuments from
the past.

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Inter-Continental, Apollo Bunder, Bombay 400 039, India. Tel: 243366, 242524.
Telex: 11 2442 TAJB IN, 11 6176 TAJB IN. Cable: TAJ GROUP.

THE TAJ GROUP OF HOTELS, INDIA.

**For 15 years
we've been
doing
a fair bit of
growing**



ECIL—the tap root of indigenous electronics progress

1967. An organisation takes birth. The mission: to meet the electronic requirements of India's atomic energy programme.

At the end of the year, the organisation finds itself with a limited production output. A turnover of Rs. 9 lakhs. A roster of 900 people. Yes, ECIL had modest beginnings. But that was ECIL yesterday.

Over the last 15 years, ECIL has changed. Totally. Beyond recognition. ECIL has grown beyond the most optimistic prophecy. ECIL presents a picture of vigorous growth. Strong. Confident. Self-reliant. Innovative. That's ECIL today.

ECIL makes a vast range of products vital to national development. Contributing significantly to such diverse fields of national endeavour as nuclear science, thermal and hydel power, communications, defence, industry, railways, medicine, education, research, to name but a few.

Right from the beginning, ECIL charted an independent course for itself. Opting for complete self-reliance. While consciously steering clear of foreign collaborations. ECIL has established the viability of totally indigenous technology.

Beginning with 300 engineers and technicians from BARC as its nucleus, ECIL today employs 7000

men and women on a countrywide basis. The manufacturing activity has grown from 25 products to over 250 products. The sales from Rs. 9 lakhs to over Rs. 59 crores. Just a few facts and figures which speak more eloquently than words!



**Electronics Corporation of
India Limited**
Hyderabad—500 762

ASP/ECIL/82/18A

Bilt

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HIGH PURITY
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TRIPOLYPHOSPHATE
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sophisticated and unique
process at their Karwar
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Works.

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Bilt has Salt Works
in Singach, Gujarat
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Bilt
Ballarpur Industries Limited
(Chemical Division)
Thapar House, 124, Janpath
NEW DELHI-110001

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(96% STPP
CONTENT)

SEKAI/128

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for satisfaction...

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Only GOLD offers both. For smoothness and satisfaction,
GOLD has no substitute.

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NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA

A-5 Green Park, New Delhi-110016

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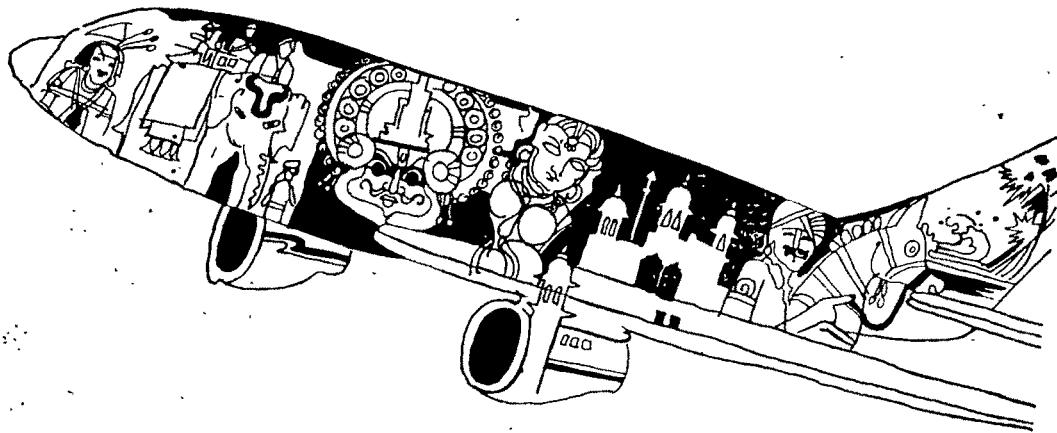
seminar

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February 1983

Millions

*With us
even time flies...*



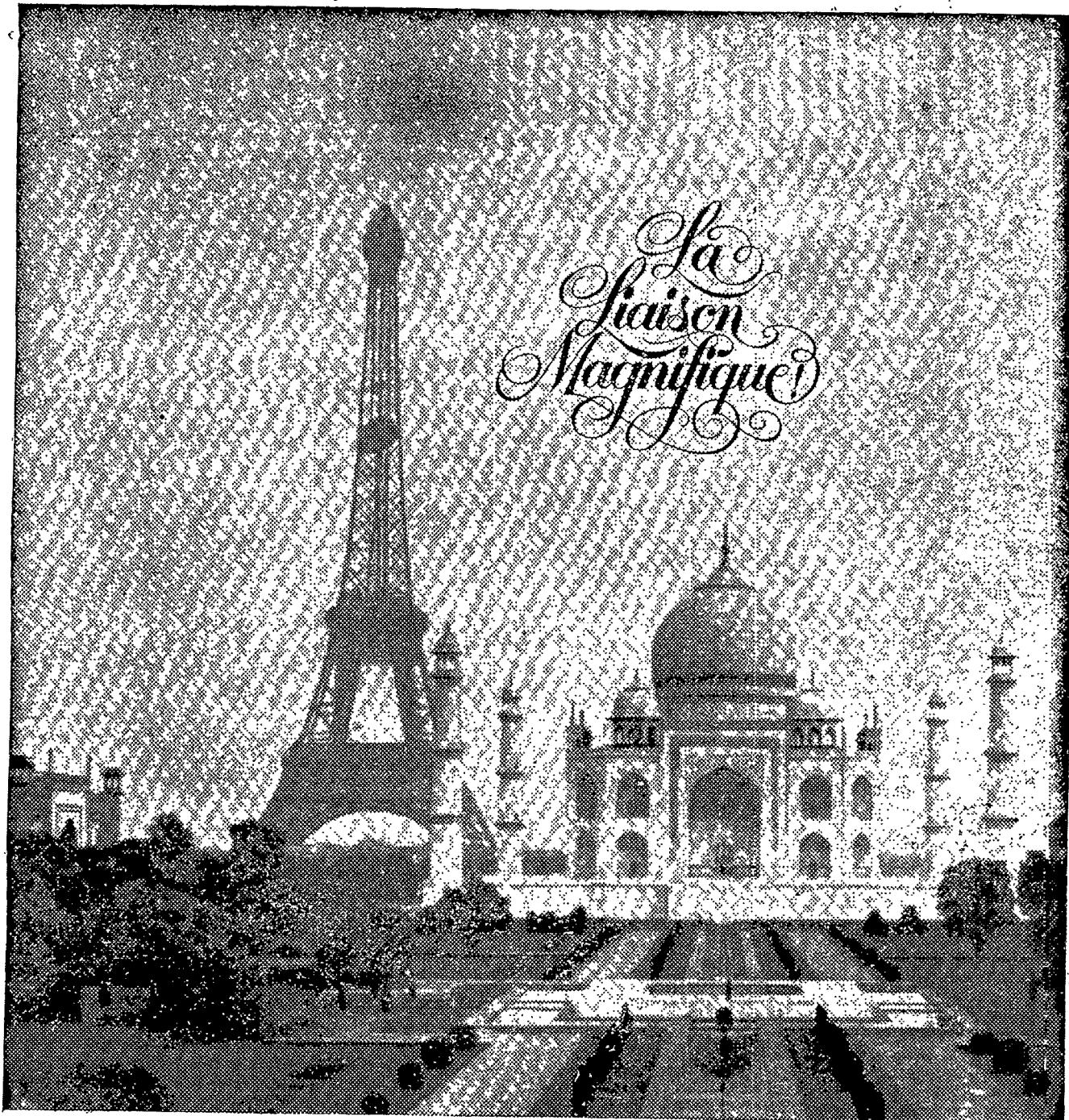
We'll take you on a voyage through time.

From ancient temples and monuments scattered all over the country, to aqua sport resorts, health spas, yoga centres and cities of towering skyscrapers.

In the changing world, there are still some parts in India that have not changed. Where nature is still as it was intended to be.

Fly Indian Airlines
We'll take you through time

 **इंडियन एयरलाइंस**
Indian Airlines



Two leading automotive manufacturers in the world have come together. Peugeot of France and Mahindra of India. A magnificent association. The famed XDP 4.90 diesel engine is now being manufactured by Mahindra.

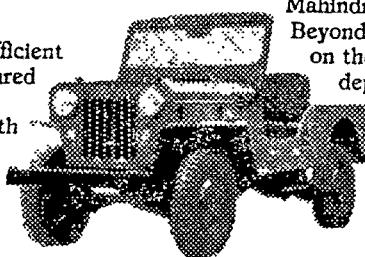
This is the first time that this fuel-efficient and noise-free engine will be manufactured outside of France. To power Mahindra vehicles that span the length and breadth of India.



PEUGEOT

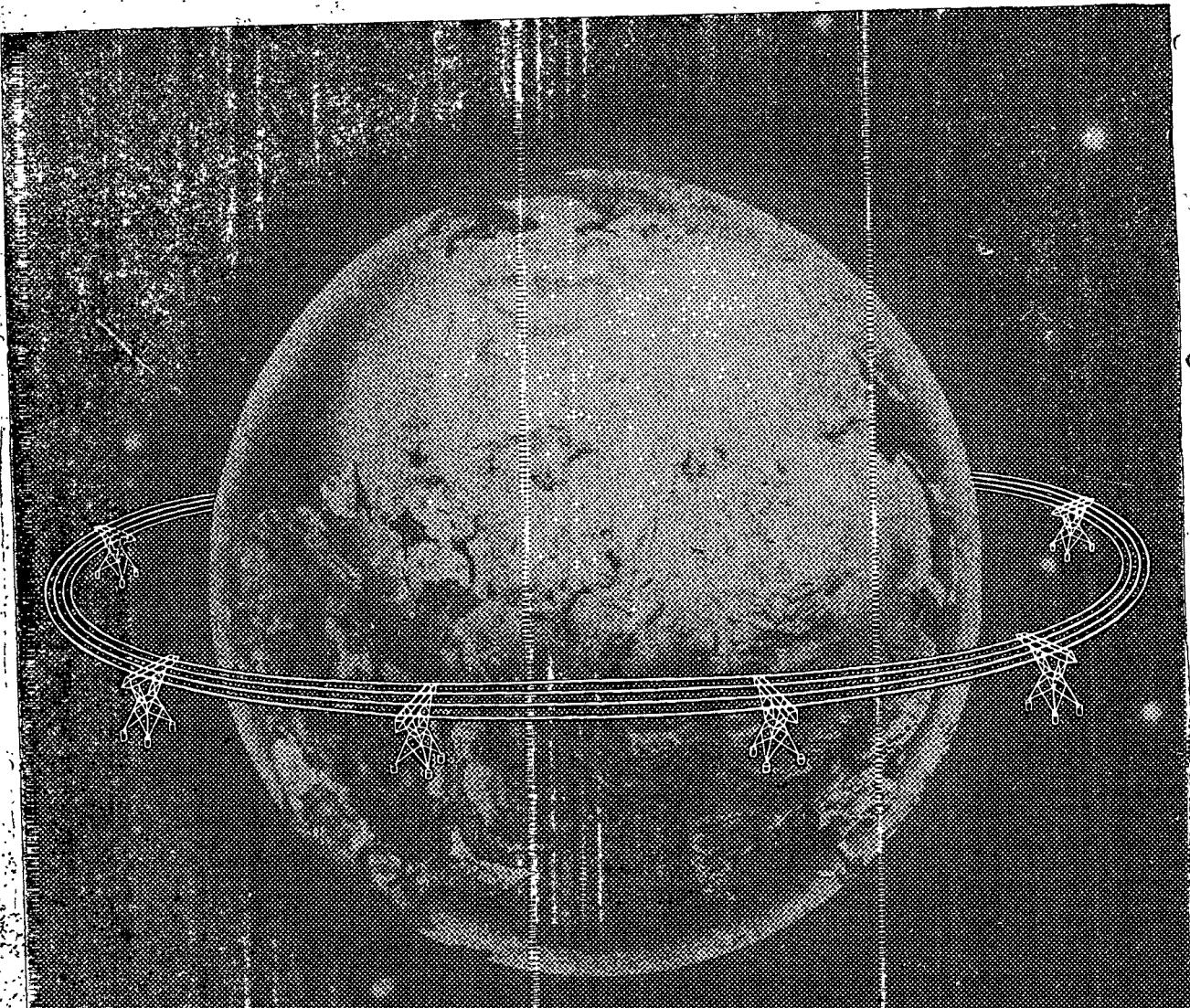
Running reminders of ruggedness and reliability. Nor do they stop there.

In 21 countries round the globe, Mahindra vehicles are proving their worth. Beyond a doubt. Proudly putting India on the world map of efficient, dependable transport.



**Mahindra and Mahindra
Limited**
Gateway Building, Apollo Bunder
Bombay 400 039, India.





Tower by tower, we are satisfying a worldwide need for more power

People in cities, towns and villages around the world switch on power transmitted by Kamani Transmission Towers.

Pioneer of power transmission line industry in India and Asia's largest producer of transmission towers,

Kamani Engineering Corporation has put a transmission girdle around more than 20 countries.

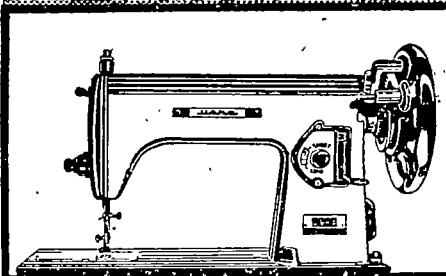
Energised by a high-powered professional management, Kamani Engineering Corporation is organised to play a positive and dominant role in international power transmission.

**KAMANI ENGINEERING
CORPORATION LIMITED**

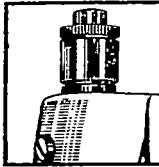
Kamani Chambers, 32, Ram Jibhai Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400 038

CHAITRA-KEC-74

Elegant looks



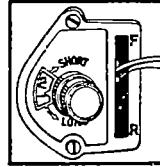
Versatile features



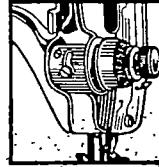
Patch Darner
for easy darning
and quick
adjustment of
pressure on
cloth.



3-position drop
feed for easy
adjustment of
feed-dog
position.



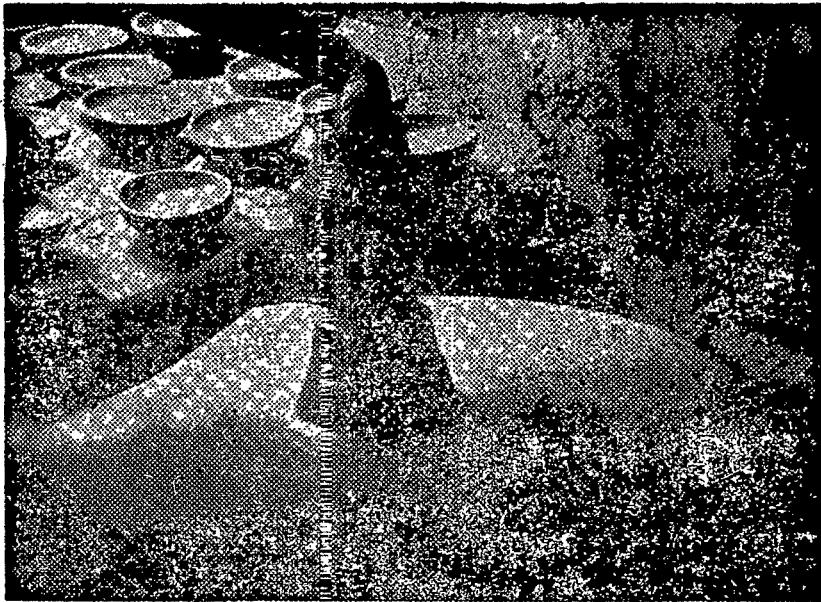
Dial-type stitch
regulator with
lever for
forward and
reverse stitch
control and
locking
arrangement.



Thread tension
adjuster for
regulating poor
thread tension.

U S H A Streamlined feature for feature a better machine

the art of good management...



**moulding our varied resources — human,
natural, technological — for the
common good.**

Shriram seminars and courses are part of this moulding process... which involves executives in a ceaseless interchange of ideas, discussion of modern techniques, evaluation and reconsideration of policies. So that the Shriram organisation is constantly infused with fresh dynamism... and our resources are utilised to the optimum.



SHIRIRAM FERTILISERS AND CHEMICALS

**When you need high quality controls,
remember...**

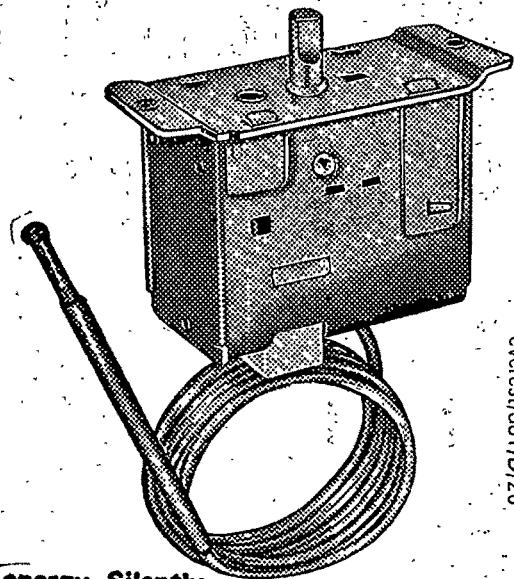
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Controls for Domestic/Commercial
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Automatic Controls

Helping to save energy. Silently.



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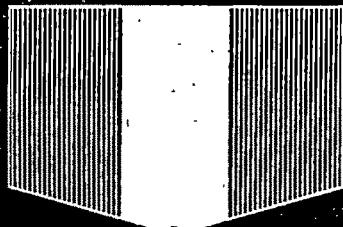


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If you're over 30, check up for cancer. Now.

Every year, hundreds die of cancer. This dreadful disease is curable, if detected early. Unfortunately, patients come for treatment only when symptoms

are observed. Or, discomforts are felt. By then, it may become too late and reach the point of no cure. If you are over 30 years old, you could be a likely victim. The best thing is to make sure. So why don't you go in for a check up? It wouldn't cost you anything because it's absolutely FREE.

Take an appointment with the Indian Cancer Society. Today.

3-pronged drive to control cancer

Cancer curable in early stages

BANGALORE, May 8. The four-day international cancer congress concluded here today, emphasising that cancer was no more a dreadful disease if it was detected in early stages. President of the Indian Council for Medical Research, Dr. P. N. Wahl, told newsmen after the concluding session that the deliberations of the conference would have far-reaching effects on prevention and control of cancer. He said that studies of different countries, which were discussed at the conference, showed that cancers of oral cavity in the cervix, breast and oesophagus were preventable.

The congress called for an informed approach of various service organisations to check cancer. It also stressed the need for setting up regional centres for research and treatment. An idea of forming a federation of Asian anti-cancer organisations was also mooted at the conference.

An many as 120 papers presented by cancer experts from different countries were discussed at the congress which was attended by over 400 delegates.

Indian cancer society secretary, Dr. D. J. Jussawalla, in his concluding remarks, suggested the setting up of the Indian association for cancer research and the Indian society for clinical oncology which would serve as a common platform to discuss various problems connected with the disease.

Cancer control

From Page 8

to some extent the known and complex metabolic pathways of the cancer cells. An offshoot of this vigorous programme of trials, Dr. Wahl, was the welcome development of collaborative control on a global basis to evaluate these compounds. In addition to the use of screening synthetic cancer drugs, an active screen indigenous

Majority Of Cancers Are Preventable

BANGALORE Nov 7. PROFESSOR Sir Richard Doll believes that a high proportion of all human cancer is due to agents in the environment and therefore can be prevented in principle.

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specialist too has voiced his views. In this way it has been possible to answer a real need of today, to gather the facts and ideas of this age and to help thinking people arrive at a certain degree of cohesion and clarity facing the problems of economics, of politics, of cul-

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NEXT MONTH : THE PARALLEL ECONOMY

282

THREE HUNDRED MILLIONS

a symposium on
ways to dissolve poverty
at the base of our society

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM A short statement of the issues involved.

A DECADE FOR ENDING RURAL POVERTY
Tarlok Singh, now retired from the
Indian Civil Service, was Secretary
to the first Planning Commission

NUTRITION AT THE BASE
C. Gopalan, Director, Nutrition
Foundation of India

BASIC NEEDS PROGRAMME
J.D. Sethi, former member,
Planning Commission

DRY FARMING PRIORITIES
Ishwarbhai Patel, former Vice-Chancellor,
Gujarat Agricultural University

TRIBALS AND SUB-PLANS
Alexander V. Verghese, Assistant Professor
(Economics), Indian Institute of
Education, Pune

STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS
B.C. Muthayya, Director of Psychology,
National Institute of Rural Development,
Hyderabad

BOOKS
Reviewed by S. Mazumdar, K. Seshadri,
Ajit Prasad, Rochita Roy Chowdhury and
Krishna Kumar

COMMUNICATION
Received from Ramesh Arora, Bhatinda

FURTHER READING
A select and relevant bibliography
compiled by A.K. Joshi

COVER
Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

IT is customary to speak of the problem of poverty as if it were something which development would dissolve. Our experience over 35 years shows that, when the base of poverty is not tackled as a priority task, the gulfs between the rich and the poor become wider as a result of development. At this rate, the 300 millions below the poverty line, according to the Planning Commission, will number 500 millions by the year 2000.

There is another dimension to this problem which is even more demoralising. Given the environment of destitution and poverty, the campaigns that are launched to alleviate the sufferings of the needy and the poor yield no tangible result. Considerable effort and resource literally 'goes down the drain' because the environment lacks sustenance. It cannot nurture. We refuse to face this fact because we continue to believe that marginal meddling will one day 'do the trick'.

The kind of poverty that exists in India, its age, its scale, and its special quality, demands the elaboration of a package similar to the one that trans-

formed the irrigated agricultural lands of this sub-continent. We now need to work out how to transform the dry farms, the marginal cultivation, and how to activise the productivity of the landless. At last we have the skills and the in-puts for such an effort. What is lacking is the collective will of our various leaderships, because the implementation of an effective package at the level where 300 millions scrape out their miserable survival will call for massive shifts in Plan investment—and rigorous follow up.

In other words, we have arrived at a point in our development where we have to mobilise public opinion to work not for immediate, but future, gains. This is more easily said than done. However, when we are made to realise that an expanding base of poverty will make the political management of this sub-continent impossible, it may be easier to get the commitments we need. This issue is only a reminder of what has to be done at macro and micro level, and is designed to spark some re-thinking among policy makers and implementers.

A decade for ending rural poverty

TARLOK SINGH

IN the middle of the fourth decade after freedom, India remains, as she has been for centuries, a rich land with poor people. The persistence and aggravation of poverty and our inability to reduce its pervasive impact to any significant extent raises serious doubt about the soundness of our political and economic institutions, about the attitudes and values which sustain them, about our capacity to bring about fundamental social and structural changes through consent and persuasion, about the ultimate relevance of many of our plans and programmes. A testing time is invariably also a time of opportunity.

Before Independence, it had seemed possible in a matter of years to translate political freedom into economic and social freedom and equality for the entire population. The aspiration remains largely unfulfilled. We have perhaps still a decade — it cannot be very much more — in which to secure, through the institutions of freedom and unity, a marked improvement in the levels of living, economic opportunities and social condition of the poorest of the poor among us, without distinction, in every nook and corner of India. The task before the nation involves both correct analysis and complete integrity of purpose. It is much too serious for populist approaches or for administrative action

on a superficial plane or for seeking alibis of any kind.

Two preliminary questions may be considered first. How have we looked at poverty in our plans? How has the problem of poverty changed over the past three decades? From answers to these questions, we can proceed to ask if the anti-poverty programmes now under way are likely to deliver their promise. If they prove ineffective, what next?

Despite perceptions about the problem of poverty which formed part of the ethos of the freedom struggle, when the opportunity came, the focus on poverty was not the central theme of our plans. It may even be said that planning itself led to a postponement of any concentrated attack on the conditions of poverty. We can see in retrospect how this happened. First, there were the overwhelming political and economic stresses that came in the wake of partition and the end of the second world war — the shortages of food, raw materials and consumer goods, the rising prices, the rehabilitation of displaced persons, the worn out condition of industrial plant and the railways, and the integration of princely territories. These called for immediate action and took attention away from the more long-term formulations such as those of the Economic Programme Committee

of the Indian National Congress (1940).

Secondly, because of the prevailing economic thinking of the period, which we all failed to challenge, while conceding in principle the need to make effective use of human resources, the critical place was assigned to capital resources. This led to a view of employment as a long-term goal and turned plans of development to an extent into shopping lists for inflows of external resources. When, with the Second Plan, priority came to be given to heavy and machine building industries as the key to a self-reliant national economy, the dependence on external resources became still greater. This was not then clearly recognized.

The fundamental failure in our plans was that, for whatever reasons, we did not build sufficiently around our internal resources and capacities, the essential needs of the mass of the population, and radical changes within the social and agrarian structure. This failure still persists. India has now come a long way and has acquired industrial and infrastructural capacities and agricultural and other potentials with which, *given the right priorities*, if it so wills, it has the means to resolve its basic problems. To shift national priorities in a fundamental sense in the direction of the people and the regions most exposed to poverty calls for a new look at all the development that has taken place and the interests that have grown around it and for a frank re-examination of the industrial and agrarian situation in the country.

Although many of the earlier features of poverty still persist, the nature of the problem has changed materially. The feudal structure and relationships have broken down. They have no longer any legitimacy either in law or in fact, even though, thanks to evasion and loopholes and poor implementation, much of the agrarian legislation enacted over the years has not been effective enough and grave inequalities continue. Along with rural inequalities, a new factor, now increasingly evident, is the growth of ten-

sions between different caste-based groups within the rural community. The unifying elements within rural society have weakened greatly. The political and electoral process has tended to foster narrow claims and loyalties rather than, as in an earlier period, fuse small aims into larger national goals and aspirations towards social cohesion and sharing at a higher level of community concern and consciousness.

Even within the rural economy, because of the growth and development that has taken place, there is now much greater differentiation. There are many regions, specially those favoured by nature and irrigation, which have advanced fairly rapidly. With these, there are many others, still the more numerous and covering much larger numbers, which have lagged behind, in which, with the doubling of population, the condition of the weaker groups has worsened both comparatively and absolutely. The contrast between regions and groups which are moving forward and those which are being left behind is all too visible and disturbing a feature of the present rural scene within every State and the country as a whole.

The current trends in the rural situation contain strong elements of disparate progress, of exploitation and neglect, of conflict and violence. With wisdom and foresight, they can still be largely managed in an environment of greater equality and integration and genuine care for the less advantaged. Such an environment cannot be created for the rural areas without facing up to the problem of widening disparities, even of concentration of income and wealth and living standards, within the urban and industrial setting. The economic and industrial choices we have made and the policies we have pursued have helped to accentuate the contrasts. In other words, it is now essential to reconsider the nature of our mixed economy and the role of the larger formations in the private sector and the pattern and priorities of industrial development.

The modern sector, including both public and private activities,

has been far too long a thing apart from the rest of the economy, an entity enabled to take the bulk of national resources, giving much less in return. It is material to the solution of the problem of rural poverty that, from now on, we use the modern or the organized sector basically as an instrument for transforming and upgrading the unorganized segments of the economy, including agriculture, small and rural industry, construction, and much trading and other activity. This implies radical changes in industrial priorities and in the relationship within each branch of industry between units at different levels of scale and technology.

From these observations, before turning to the current anti-poverty programmes, there are certain broad conclusions which should be first emphasized.

First, we have to place the rural-urban and agricultural-industrial relationships within a markedly different economic and social framework from that which has taken shape over the past years. On the existing basis, the gap in incomes and productivity between rural and urban areas and between agricultural and industrial workers will continue to grow and the means will not be available for transforming the rural economy in a basic sense.

Secondly, considering the growth of the population and the labour force and the rising number of virtually unemployed or underemployed literate rural youth, through agriculture alone, it is not possible to find an answer to the problem of rural poverty. Even in the more favoured regions, within years, the present agricultural prosperity of fairly large numbers will prove wholly inadequate in relation to emerging needs. The heart of the transformation needed is to build up over a period, within every region or area in the country, a system whereby agriculture and industry are planned together, so as to lead to a composite rural-industrial economy, adequately supported by social and economic overheads.

Only as we develop the resources and potentials of each region or

area through composite agricultural-industrial development (founded doubtless upon more intensive agricultural and rural development), will it become possible to provide work for all, secure the well-being of the entire population and especially of the weaker groups, and take care of the fast growing numbers of unskilled workers as well as literate rural youth.

In the third place, delays and failures in implementing agrarian laws make their early enforcement more and not less urgent than before. Through concerted action and a renewed political will, the ground lost has to be regained speedily to the utmost extent possible. The first initiative and responsibility lies with the Centre. Certainly, barring categories of owners specially exempted (like defence personnel, widows, minors, etc.) tenant cultivators should be declared owners of the lands they till and the present owners should be compensated through bonds. *Benami* transfers of land (in terms of the 1972 guidelines on land ceilings) should be identified and cancelled. Land tribunals at local levels, with which 'popular' supervisory committees (including beneficiary groups) are associated, should help secure effective enforcement of the laws.

The completion of land reform on the basis of laws already enacted is a necessary cleansing operation in every part of the country. As this task is accomplished, it will become possible in each State to enter upon the crucial and hitherto largely neglected tasks of strengthening the organization of agriculture at the base, turning deficit into viable units, solving the basic problems of landless labour, and bringing about fundamental changes in the economic structure and pattern of occupations within each rural region.

It should be added here that in the limited sense of creating a new set of man-land relations, land reform was always conceived as the first phase of more far-reaching agrarian change and reorganization. India has still to embark on this second and more urgent task of

agricultural and agrarian reconstruction. The failure in this respect is a serious commentary on our planning, politics and administration over many years. As it happened, in the fifties, food aid from the US served to reduce the urgency of domestic action on farm prices and agrarian reconstruction. In the sixties, the early results of high-yielding varieties had the same effect. In the seventies, after the oil crisis, short-term exigencies have filled the stage and little thought has been given to the essential social and structural changes needed.

In the fourth place, for ending poverty, alongside efforts to develop a composite rural-industrial structure and to complete agrarian change on the basis of the existing land legislation, intensive long-range development should be undertaken in regions which have a high concentration of poverty. These regions are easy to identify and only recently the National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas has made recommendations covering specifically tribal areas, hill areas, drought-prone and desert areas, chronically flood-affected areas, and coastal areas affected by salinity.

Hitherto, larger resource allocations, for instance, for hill regions, have come as a response to pressures. The notion of intensive, comprehensive and long-range development of each poverty region implies deliberate, planned resource allocations adequate for the purpose in view and, therefore, both greater resource mobilization than in the past and formulation of new social and economic priorities and new technical choices.

Poverty concentration regions are generally lacking in irrigation. Many do not even have adequate rainfall. Some may have too much rain accompanied by heavy soil erosion. Therefore, the research effort now under way on various aspects of dryland farming has the utmost urgency for areas marked by low productivity of land and widespread poverty.

The anti-poverty programmes which are being currently imple-

mented can be traced back in principle to the Third Plan, though later plans have introduced many useful refinements and improvements in analysis. Perhaps their greatest weakness is that they have not been built up from the ground. They have been conceived from above and in a somewhat abstract and mechanistic manner. Their rationale derives less from the reality in the villages, more from the notion of a poverty line and calculations based on it. Far too little attention is given to the sociology, economics and geography of poverty. Following data on food consumption gathered in different rounds of the National Sample Survey, plans advance estimates of numbers below the poverty line in rural and urban areas in different States. Thus, the Sixth Plan has used the poverty line of Rs. 65 per month in 1977-78 prices for rural areas and Rs. 75 per month for urban areas, corresponding respectively to minimum daily requirements of 2400 and 2100 calories in rural and urban areas.

On this basis, it is estimated that 51 per cent of the rural population and 38 per cent of the urban population fall below the poverty line, making up a total population of 317 million. As part of this game of numerology, only recently the surprising official claim was made that, in terms of assumptions behind the earlier estimates, by 1981-82, numbers below the poverty line should have dropped to 282 million and by 1984-85 they should drop to 215 million. Such statistics have in them a large element of make-believe and are an impediment to serious and sustained action against poverty at the grassroots.

There is need now to focus realistically on the fundamental conditions of economic and social existence for the vast numbers who live close to the margin of subsistence and to set about, step by step, and within a consistent system of thought, to alter those very conditions.

Within each poverty concentration area as well as in other areas, the socio-economic groups most affected by the condition of poverty

include a large population of small farmers, the vast majority of marginal farmers, rural artisans, and those engaged in traditionally poor occupations.

In more general terms, for the country as a whole and for each State, on the basis of social analysis, it is essential to devise concrete strategies for bringing about a series of planned improvements and changes in the conditions that govern the life and livelihood of each of the socio-economic groups subsisting under the burden of deep and oppressive poverty.

This is the real meaning of planning. This is the very aspect to which sufficient attention has not yet been given. Instead, earlier administrative courses are being adopted. An attempt is made in the name of the integrated Rural Development Programme somehow to pick upon households in the greatest need for support. For want of resources, the criteria adopted on paper are in practice pushed further downwards and only a small proportion are actually able to get some support by way of subsidy and loan.

There are many operational problems in combining subsidies from the budget and loans from commercial banks. What is in fact offered in most cases is little better than relief. Only a small proportion of those helped succeed in becoming viable in any economic sense. It is worth recalling that for Gandhiji, *antyodaya*, the welfare of the least, was complementary to *sarvodaya*, the welfare of all. The one cannot be secured without the other.

The system, even as it exists, is a step forward. It can be greatly improved and strengthened, provided the approach of coordinated decentralised planning is followed systematically at the district and block level and policies directed to area development and to different socio-economic groups are implemented together. In the belief that developmental support and benefits should be restricted only to the poorest households, for some time past, the approach of coordinated or integrated development at the

district and block level has been greatly weakened in most States under impulses which have gone directly and without much examination from the Centre. Consequently, the decentralisation processes from the Centre to the States, from the State level to the district and from the district to the block and below, have been deflected and distorted, and the local development machinery has become quite inadequate for the tasks supposedly assigned to it.

Let us now turn to the circumstances of the poverty groups mentioned above. Their problems call equally for the right policy formulations and for precise action within the total setting of each region or area. The fact that a high proportion of the very poor belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other backward classes has led to undue concentration on the issue of 'reservations' of jobs in public

banks and co-operatives, agricultural research, and marketing and processing facilities. By and large, the benefits of these institutions and services have been availed of more fully in areas which have irrigation and assured rainfall. Even in these areas, farmers with viable holdings are able to derive much larger benefits. This is to be expected in the ordinary course and explanations in terms of vested interests and the rural elite are only partly accurate. Therefore, beyond enforcement of land reform and the problem of bringing landless labourers into the mainstream of development, the central issue in agricultural development is to find ways of strengthening the economy of small and marginal farmers.

The agricultural census of 1976-77 shows a marked deterioration in the situation of small and marginal farmers compared to the earlier census of 1970-71:

Distribution and Size of Holdings

	Proportion of operational holdings (%)		Average holding (ha)	
	1970-71	1976-77	1970-71	1976-77
Marginal (below 1 ha)	50.9	54.6	0.40	0.39
Small (1-2 ha)	18.9	18.0	1.44	1.42
Semi-medium (2-4 ha)	15.0	14.3	2.81	2.78
Medium (4-10 ha)	11.4	10.1	6.03	6.04
Large (10 ha and above)	3.8	3.1	18.15	17.57
	100.0	100.0	2.28	2.00
			(average)	(average)

offices and of training facilities in educational institutions. The deeper problems to be attacked have tended to be ignored. At best, reservations can only be part of the answer and, beyond a point, they create other unmanageable tensions in any society which ultimately seeks social fusion and integration of diverse groups and ending of past systems of stratification and discrimination.

Under the plans, there has been considerable development of institutions and services in support of agriculture. These include extension services, credit from commercial

In States in which the average holding was already much below the national average, there has been a further decline.

	Average holding (ha)	
	1970-71	1976-77
Bihar	1.5	1.1
Tamil Nadu	1.45	1.25
Uttar Pradesh	1.16	1.05
Kerala	0.57	0.49
West Bengal	1.20	0.99

There is no question that the numbers and proportion of small

and marginal farmers will increase further in the future. Through expansion of irrigation and increase in cropped area, with high yielding varieties, under favourable conditions, a somewhat larger proportion of small holdings may become viable. But the vast majority of small holdings and most marginal holdings will continue to be deficit units. This is part of the explanation for the increase in area leased in by relatively larger farmers from small and marginal farmers. This has been widely noted as one of the consequences of the 'green revolution'. Such a development is implicit in the present rural situation.

Clearly, among cultivators, with intense poverty in the bottom rungs, there is a high degree of concentration of land with medium and large holdings. No conceivable land reform legislation will materially alter this condition. The problem can only be dealt with as one of reorganisation of agriculture as an industry. Within the existing structure, here and there additional relief or support can be given but, except in some favoured areas, there can be no solution either to the problem of inequitable distribution of services or to the problem of poverty for the bulk of the cultivators.

The importance of additional support or a package of services to meet the needs of the small and marginal farmers is not to be underestimated. Small and marginal farmers' agencies set up a few years ago were a useful step. They had yet to develop beyond providing ancillary help like milch cattle or poultry or piggery units or assist in getting more credit when they were merged in the Integrated Rural Development Programme, that is, in effect done away as a separate plank in agricultural extension.

An Expert Group set up by the Planning Commission to report on Programmes for Alleviation of Poverty made three recommendations early in 1982 which have yet to be implemented. Firstly, there should be a separate Small Farmers Assistance Programme for farmers with 2 hectares and below. Secondly, in the case of minor irrigation; the usual subsidy (50 per cent) should

be given to community water harvesting and watershed management programmes. Thirdly, for individuals subsidies should be available up to 4 hectares ownership in the case of minor irrigation projects.

for better land use, improved drainage, and development of social forestry.

Up to a point, rural industrialisation may be advanced through local entrepreneurs. But, in a more basic sense, in Indian conditions, co-operative or group forms of organisation for agriculture are a necessary condition, for combining agricultural and non-agricultural forms of work and making fuller productive use of available surplus labour in activities requiring rising levels of skill.

Everywhere, as a consequence of the growth of modern industry, rural artisans are losing traditional work opportunities and are becoming part of the general labour reserve of each area. Therefore, as an ingredient of the development of composite agricultural-industrial economies, an important responsibility in planning is to devise policies at the national and State level, which will deliberately create 'space' for smaller and more labour-intensive units within the scheme of 'common production programmes.' Protection of rural artisans in their existing crafts and steps to improve their techniques and organisation and to assure stable markets for their output are both equally necessary.

With agriculture rising to progressively higher scientific and technical levels and patterns of rural consumption undergoing steady change, there is need for many ancillary and support services for which new skills have to be developed within each area. In the past, skilled work in the villages was associated with the badge of caste and tradition. This need not be so in the future. Far-reaching changes in the pattern of skills and occupations have to be deliberately planned for as much on economic considerations as for creating conditions of social equality, irrespective of past labels.

Those in need of work, besides the landless, form large numbers of small and marginal farmers and rural artisans and the younger members of other households in the village. If all the available labour,

not otherwise self-employed or engaged in wage employment on its own were looked upon as a pool, it is possible for each community to plan for the use of such labour as is likely to be available within its fold for the season or even the year ahead. This could take the form of an informal community institution such as a *land workers' association or society*. Such a group could obtain a variety of contracts for constructions jobs within reasonable distance of the village, obtain bank credit for tools, receive technical guidance, and begin to get some of its members trained in more skilled occupations such as masons or technicians of various kinds.

The land workers' association or society could function as one of the normal village institutions. It may well become a perfectly natural and appropriate form of organisation of the rural poor from within. At a later stage, land workers' associations or societies in an area could join into larger unions and acquire both broader functions and greater social power. Enforcement of minimum wages prescribed under the law would also be a natural consequence of such an organisation. As with land, so with labour, the small man by himself is always weak and easily exploited. Therefore, forms of group action are no less valid in the use of labour than in the use of land. They may be somewhat easier to organise.

In considering the problems of such large groups at the lowest levels of poverty as marginal and small farmers, landless labourers, rural artisans and those engaged in traditionally poor occupations, without neglecting the practical possibilities of what can be done today or tomorrow, it is exceedingly important to look ahead and plan for the vital changes which have to be brought about over a period. Short-term answers, useful as they may be up to a point, should be designed as steps in a longer-term scheme of social, economic, technological and institutional change not only for individual socio-economic groups, but equally for the region and the community as a whole. This is the essence of the goal of ending rural poverty within the present decade.

Nutrition at the base

C. GOPALAN

IN most discussions of the 'population problem', major concern and attention has been directed to the quantitative dimension—the alarming growth in numbers outstripping available or anticipated resources essential for sustaining such growth. There is, however, another dimension, of the 'population problem' in our country, the *qualitative* dimension which should cause even greater concern and alarm; this is the steady deterioration of the physical and mental calibre of our human resources — the most precious of all national resources — through persistent ill-health and undernutrition afflicting large proportions of successive generations of our children during the crucial years of their growth and development.

Thus, of the nearly 23 million children who will be born in our country in 1983, nearly 3 million may be expected to die before they reach the first year; another one million more will drop by the wayside before they complete their childhood. Of the remaining 19 million, nearly 9 million will emerge into adulthood with impaired physical stamina, low productivity and poor mental abilities because of serious undernutrition and ill-health during their childhood; yet another 7 million who will suffer milder forms of malnutrition may reach adulthood with less striking physical and mental impairment. Only less than 3 million of the 23 million to be born in 1983 will become truly healthy, physically fit, productive

*Extracted from the Inaugural Address delivered at the VIII Annual Conference of the Indian Association for the Study of Population, December 27-29, 1982.

and intellectually capable citizens of this country.

Thus, the full genetic potential for growth, physical and mental development, would have been achieved by less than 19 per cent of the children born; and even this may perhaps be an overestimate. In absolute terms, the annual numbers of citizens of sub-standard quality that will be added to our population will steadily rise in the years ahead if present trends persist. This steady and relentless undermining of the most valuable of all our resources, poses a far greater threat to our nation than any threat of armed aggression from external agencies. It must however be pointed out that this frightening scenario is based on currently prevailing trends in our national health and nutrition scene, and only seeks to indicate what would happen if these trends continued.

The qualitative dimension of the population problem as stated above, is, of course, interrelated to the quantitative dimension in a mutually synergistic fashion. Thus, while the relentless increase in numbers aggravates the qualitative deterioration, the latter serves to facilitate such increase.

It must however be emphasised that population growth accounts only partly for the progressive erosion of the quality of our human resources, and the current picture of ill-health and malnutrition in the country. Even with our present population and food resources, if all the food available in the country can be distributed in accordance with physiological needs, there will be very little malnutrition in the country. This will of course imply the raising of the income levels of the vast majority of the rural poor. The total amount of food needed to bridge the calorie-gap in the diets of our poor children in the entire country represents only a small fraction of our buffer stocks. Again, it is not population growth that is preventing doctors, nurses and health personnel from going to rural areas, or our policy makers from providing basic minimal health-care to our rural masses. Population growth provides a con-

venient alibi for those who are either unwilling or unable to take and implement those hard decisions necessary to remove the glaring socio-economic, and rural-urban disparities which disfigure our national scene today, and which are largely responsible for the present state of ill-health and under-nutrition in the country.

Family-planning programmes do not call for sacrifices from the rich, nor do they threaten entrenched vested interests. It is tempting, therefore, to lay the blame for all the ills of the poor on their own improvidence and offer them family-planning programmes as a panacea. This is indeed what the developed countries are doing with respect to poor developing countries and, in turn, what the urban rich within the country are doing with respect to their own rural poor.

Let me add at once that I do not underrate the great importance and the imperative need for family-planning programmes and population control measures. It is in the national interest that these programmes continue to receive the highest priority and indeed that they are further intensified. But the problem of ill-health and under-nutrition among the poor will not be solved by these measures alone within the next three decades.

Lest it should be said that the picture of under-nutrition as presented above is exaggerated, let us take a closer look. For some years now, Sukhatme has argued that the magnitude of under-nutrition in the country is not as high as 40 per cent, but only around half this figure. Even if, for argument's sake, we accept the lower figure, the number of undernourished people in the country will be around 140 million; certainly not a situation to feel complacent about! Sukhatme's thesis is that in judging the adequacy of diets, the yard-stick should not be the recommended mean intake (a yard-stick that is now widely used by national and international bodies) but recommended mean intake minus 2 standard deviations ($m-2SD$): using the yard-stick he recommends, half the problem of under-nutrition in

the country can be 'wiped out' — at least on paper if not in reality.

Sukhatme has tried to support his thesis through some physiological (not statistical) postulates which have no factual foundation of proven validity. Sukhatme's views have been forcefully challenged and rebutted on the basis of his own data by several eminent members of his own statistical fraternity, let alone physiologists and nutrition scientists. But, what is important for our purpose here is the fact that successive reports of the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau in Hyderabad show that even with using Sukhatme's questionable yard-stick of $m-2SD$ of recommended intake (a yard-stick which serves to underestimate under-nutrition) more than 50 per cent of children under five suffer from under-nutrition and that in some parts of the country, the figure is as high as 80 per cent. Thus, it would appear that Sukhatme's new yard-stick does not help to wipe out malnutrition even on paper!

The latest reports of the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau also show that in nearly 85 per cent of children under 5 years of age, weight/age is less than 80 per cent of the normal values observed in well-nourished Indian children not subject to socio-economic constraints. Here Sukhatme argues that we may ignore weight-deficits up to 60 per cent of normal values and consider only those children with higher weight deficits — i.e., those with weight/age less than 60 per cent of normal values, as under-nourished. This will again 'help' to reduce the magnitude of the malnutrition problem on paper!

The justification profferred for this approach is that it is only children with weights less than 60 per cent of normal that are mal-nourished severely enough to be on the verge of death. The others may somehow 'muddle through' and manage to survive, and so could be described as 'adapted' — meaning that they have come to terms with, and have learnt to reconcile themselves to their bad lot.

In the first place, the 60 per cent cut-off point is wholly arbitrary and

is not based on any physiological criteria. In the second place, the entire reasoning is based on lack of appreciation of the true implications of the word 'adaptation'. Adaptation has been apparently considered as equivalent to or synonymous with normalcy. A person with high blood-pressure can 'adapt' himself to his condition through hypertrophy of his heart; but no cardiologist will pronounce him as normal. The fact that between death and normalcy, there exists a broad twilight zone of morbidity, functional impairment of various kinds, apathy, lack of sense of well-being, poor physical stamina, low productivity, etc., has been largely lost sight of.

Malnourished children who may escape death eventually grow into stunted adults of low body-size and productivity; and low body-sized women with relatively small birestral diameters beget babies of low body weight which in turn develop along a low growth trajectory (unless taken in hand for special nutrition care in infancy). In a recent in-depth longitudinal study of rural communities in Mexico, Chavez and his colleagues have clearly portrayed the long-term effects on physical development, productivity, mental functioning and behavioural attitude of survivors of childhood malnutrition who had reached adulthood. They also refer to the 'limited intra-uterine foetal development' in small-sized undernourished women, which in turn affects the weight of the child at birth and limits his development resulting in his ending up as a small adult. But then, we are told that — 'low body size is welcome ("small is beautiful") because the energy requirements of such subjects will be low; that the resultant low productivity and low earning capacity should not matter because in any case we are a labour-intensive, cheap-labour economy. Our labourers have the body size suited to our poor economy!'

It should be obvious that this is precisely the approach that will serve to perpetuate undernutrition in the country and aggravate the

progressive qualitative deterioration of human resources. The following quotation from Cravioto, a pioneer in studies of the effect of under-nutrition on child development, sums up the situation: "...Survival from severe malnutrition may constitute the event that starts a developmental path characterised by psychological defective functioning, school failure and subsequent sub-normal adaptive functioning. At the familial and societal levels the ultimate results of this chain of events is what in an ecological sense could be called "a spiral effect". A low level of adaptive functioning, lack of modern knowledge, social custom, infection, or environmental insufficiency of foods produces malnutrition which gives a large pool of survivors who come to function in sub-optimal ways. Such survivors are themselves at risk of being the victims of their poor socio-economic environment, being less effective than otherwise would be the case in their social adaptations. In turn they will choose mates of similar characteristics and may rear children under conditions and in a fashion fatally programmed to produce a new generation of malnourished individuals."

It is a tragedy that childhood undernutrition contributes heavily to high child mortality; but an even greater tragedy, from the national point of view, is that it generates a pool of sub-standard survivors who serve to perpetuate the under-nutrition scenario over successive generations.

Protein caloric malnutrition is not our only major nutritional problem, though perhaps it is the most important. The other major nutritional problems which affect vast segments of our population — goitre, iron-deficiency anaemia and nutritional blindness deserve special mention. Nutritional blindness is already attracting governmental attention; I will here confine my comments to the two other problems.

It has been estimated that today about 40 million people are suffering from goitre. This is not just a cosmetic problem but a disease

which impairs health and productivity. Recent studies, one carried out by a team for the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, and another by a team headed by Prof. K.N. Agarwal on behalf of the Nutrition Foundation of India, have provided new indications of the impact of goitre on child development. Earlier we had imagined that the damage inflicted by goitre on child development was restricted to clinically detectable cases of cretinism which are relatively small. But Prof. Agarwal's studies suggest that developmental quotients of children of goitrous mothers are significantly lower though they do not actually exhibit clinical signs of frank cretinism.

Considering that the endemic goitre belt in our country stretches across the entire sub-Himalaya region, and endemic goitre zones have also been detected in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, we have in the goitre problem another major factor contributing to the qualitative erosion of our population. Since I have already described the current sad state of our National Goitre Control Programme elsewhere, it is not necessary to say anything more here.

Iron-deficiency anaemia is a relatively ancient disease, but some recent observations indicate some important new dimensions. There was a time when it used to be thought that iron-deficiency anaemia was largely a disease of women of the reproductive period. Studies carried out in the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, have however shown that it is also very much a disease of children. In a fairly large sample, nearly 63 per cent of children below 3 years of age and about 45 per cent of children between 3 and 5 years were found to suffer from anaemia; the anaemia being moderate or severe in 10 per cent to 15 per cent. The disease is not dramatic in its effects and therefore goes largely undetected and untreated in poor communities.

One of the most exciting discoveries in the field of nutrition in recent times is that iron deficiency can deleteriously alter brain biochemistry and function; and thereby

influence human behaviour itself. The involvement of iron in central nervous system oxidative metabolism, dopamine receptor function, catecholamine metabolism and in neurotransmitter metabolite function has been demonstrated; and the relationship between biochemical changes in brain metabolism induced by iron deficiency and behavioural/cognitive changes implicating specific metabolic pathways has been elucidated.

These observations indicate that iron-deficiency anaemia which is so widespread in our population could bring about functional changes that could alter the entire behavioural pattern of the subjects concerned — that is, of whole segments of our population. The enormous significance of this finding from the point of view of the social development of poor communities has yet to be fully elucidated and comprehended. It is however clear that iron deficiency, which we had taken for granted, can in fact be an important factor in bringing about a qualitative change in the behaviours and attitudes of our poor populations.

The same sections of our population who are the victims of food deprivation are also the victims of other stresses affecting their health — poor environmental sanitation, lack of personal hygiene, lack of easy access to adequate, safe drinking water and lack of basic minimal health-care. These stresses are compounded and aggravated by lack of education and lack of knowledge regarding the optimal ways of utilisation of their meagre resources to their maximal advantage. In fact, the picture of undernutrition described earlier is the cumulative effect of all these factors. As in the case of our food resources, there is a gross maldistribution of health manpower and health-care resources as well. The 'game' continues to be played with loaded dice, resulting in progressive accentuation of disparities. Just as in global economics, there is a 'North' and a 'South', within the country itself we have apparently a more urgent North-South problem.

Infant Mortality Rate in our rural population has remained stationary

in the past decade (136 in 1970 and 136 in 1978). There has been some decline in the urban mortality rate — from 90 in 1970 to 70 in 1978, and thus the rural-urban disparity today is even greater than a decade ago. Age specific death rates in the 0-4 year age group have shown only a slight decline (55.3 in 1970 to 50.4 in 1978). These figures would suggest that there has been no significant improvement in the health conditions of our population as a whole, during the last decade.

Our experience in the last few years also indicates that 'rural development' programmes need not necessarily be automatically reflected in better health/nutritional status, especially of women and children. This has been strikingly illustrated by the Punjab experience. Cowan draws pointed attention to the curious paradox that while the villages around Ludhiana in Punjab are booming with prosperity and only 11 per cent of the rural families of the State live below the poverty line, the Infant Mortality Rate has shown no decline, and the number of premature low birth-weight babies has increased.

Cowan attributes this to the following factors. 'The fruits of development were being enjoyed by the privileged approximately two-thirds of each village who do not belong to the scheduled castes, — the landowners. As for the poor, development had certainly increased their work opportunities, their incomes and the total amount of food consumed by the family and the state of nutrition of the male wage earners and older children was satisfactory... As for the mother of the poor community however, "prosperity" had resulted in more work, more food to be cooked, fewer opportunities to rest even during the latter months of pregnancy, little time to expand on infant feeding.' It is the children of these poor mothers — especially the female children — that accounted for the high mortality and high prevalence of malnutrition — 50 per cent of the girls and 20 per cent of the boys below 5 years suffering severe malnutrition in prosperous rural Punjab!

On the basis of these observations, Cowan goes on to support and endorse my earlier suggestion for including a specific health/nutrition component as an integral part of all Rural Development/Employment Programmes. She concludes that because of the 'additional burdens' imposed on the mother by "prosperity", Infant Mortality Rate and Malnutrition will not decrease without an inbuilt health and nutrition component specially designed to meet the special needs of the under-privileged mother, and help her to find a solution which will not deprive her of income generating opportunities while not jeopardising her health. It is to be hoped that the lessons of the Punjab experience will benefit future rural employment programmes in the country.

There is now increasing concern in the country over the possible erosion of the breast-feeding practice as a result of unethical and aggressive sales promotion campaigns of baby food manufacturers. We must also give careful consideration to the possible effects of increasing employment opportunities to poor women in rural areas on the breast-feeding practice. We must institute and devise arrangements to ensure that without denying income-generating opportunities to women, the practice of breast-feeding is not undermined and jeopardised. If we do not do so, we are sure to find infant malnutrition increasing substantially in spite of increasing employment and increasing income to mothers. These will certainly be major areas of concern to social, health, and development scientists in the next two decades.

A subject which will inevitably receive increasing focus and special attention in our country in the coming decades will be the health/nutrition problems of the aged. Our life expectancy is still only around 52 years and the age structure of our population still reflects overwhelming preponderance of children and will continue to do so for some decades. Even so, the problems of the aged will receive increasing attention in the years ahead, not so much because of relative increase in

their numbers, but because of the rapidly changing family structures, value systems, urban migration, industrialisation and increasing employment of women. Joint families are slowly and steadily breaking and the old value systems which enjoined protection of old parents by their children are steadily weakening. The old must soon learn to stand on their own! The recent Tamil Nadu Meal Programme highlighted the fact that old subjects in rural areas required as much nutritional care as the children, and for this reason the programme has been structured in such a way as to benefit the old and the destitutes.

Thus, the next two or three decades will witness the aggravation of several current distressing features and the emergence of new ones in our population, and all these together constituting the 'qualitative dimension' of the population problem will pose formidable challenges to demographers, health and social scientists, planners and policy-makers. I will certainly not be presumptuous enough to offer here a blue-print for the solution of all these problems. However, I wish to specially refer to four areas to which I feel particular attention has to be drawn,

(1) *Food Production:* We have certainly done well with regard to our food-grain production during the last two decades. But there is absolutely no room for any complacency with regard to the coming two decades; indeed, there is cause for anxiety. Thus, we are able to increase the total area under food-grain cultivation from 110.58 million hectares in 1955-56 to 128.18 million hectares in 1975-76. In 1980-81, the total area under food-grain cultivation was 125.70 million hectares. Thus, with regard to bringing in more area under cultivation, we have apparently already reached a plateau phase. The yield per hectare which was 605 kg/hectare in 1955-56 rose to 944 kg/hectare in 1975-76. In 1980-81 we registered a yield of 1032 kg/hectare. Apparently we have so far been able to maintain a sustained increase in yield, but it seems unlikely that we will be able to maintain a continuous increase of a progressively increasing

order (which is what we will need to keep abreast of population growth) throughout the next two decades.

Our per capita availability of food grains has not diminished so far in spite of the tremendous population growth. But are we going to be able to sustain this record over the next two decades, during which we will be entering perhaps the most crucial phase in the race between population growth and increase of food supply. I must confess to the uneasy feeling that the Green Revolution may be losing its momentum, and that we must invoke and press into service new strategies to maintain increasing food production. We may also have to devote greater attention to items other than food-grains. I reckon the next two decades as the decades of real challenge to our agricultural scientists.

(2) If we have to avoid violent social unrest in the next two decades, we must implement our Rural Development/Employment Programme in right earnest. These programmes must be designed to ensure productive and remunerative employment for the rural poor throughout the year and not just as sporadic famine-relief operations.

(3) Minimum wages for agricultural labourers have to be fixed at least at Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 daily especially since these labourers have no wages at all for 3 to 4 months in the year. The ridiculously low wage of Rs. 5 daily suggested by the Wage Committee in Bombay, and even the Rs. 7.50 recently suggested at an All-India meet constitute frank exploitation and social injustice. It is not enough to prescribe a minimum wage; it must be implemented. Unless the income levels of agricultural labourers are substantially raised our health and family-planning, and universal primary education programmes in the countryside will not make headway.

(4) The most crucial population segment from the point of view of family welfare, nutrition and health, is constituted by the young unmarried girls of age 10 and above in rural areas. Girls in rural areas are generally married off when they are barely twelve or thirteen years of

age, and once they are so married they are 'lost'. By the time the girls reach their 25th year they have generally already had their five children and all family planning programmes addressed to rural women in their late twenties are largely futile.

What is generally not appreciated is that the 'potential' fertility of undernourished women is actually very low in comparison to their well-nourished counterparts. Their reproductive span is low; they attain menarche later and menopause much earlier than well-nourished women. What is more, there is now evidence that for nearly ten years before they attain their menopause the undernourished women are actually infertile, the menstrual cycles being presumably anovulatory. I am, therefore, afraid that our family-planning programmes addressed to poor rural women in their late twenties is akin to bolting the door after the horse has escaped.

The most important single step that will reduce birth rates, is the raising of the age of girls at marriage. Girls are married off early because, unlike boys, they are now considered 'economic liabilities' by their poor parents. The real key to the success of our family-planning programme lies in our finding a way by which poor rural parents will find it rewarding not to marry off their daughters till they are at least 20 years of age.

I, therefore, suggest that an imaginative special programme be instituted in our rural areas addressed solely to young unmarried girls of 10 years or more. This programme could be spearheaded by women's organisations with technical help from Home Science Colleges and supported by the Khadi and Village Industries Organisation (or any other equivalent appropriate government or public sector agency) and should include a special two-year education programme on infant feeding and child rearing, nutrition, family-planning, personal and environmental hygiene, plus, most importantly, vocational training designed to impart special skills for self-employment in selected fields appropriate to the particular rural areas.

The candidates may include even school drop-outs.

During this period the girls may receive a monthly stipend; after this training they should be helped over the next 2 years through bank loans and managerial and marketing services and technical help provided by government or public sector agencies, to set up in their own village the cottage industry for which they have been trained, either singly or in collective groups; the girls will be paid for the products they produce and in addition receive a salary. Girls who marry before completing 20 years of age will automatically drop out of the programme; those on the programme who marry after 20, may continue to receive these facilities till such time as they have two children and no more.

Such a programme will have several obvious spin-offs and will help to transform the social scene in the countryside and enhance the status of women in their own homes and the society.

(5) Despite numerous conferences and committees, effective extension of basic health care to our rural areas appears still a distant dream. If we do not achieve this ideal before 1980, then 'Health For All by 2000 AD' will have turned out to be no more than a hollow slogan. Among the many measures that have to be undertaken for this purpose, I will briefly refer to two of my earlier suggestions; (1) I plead for the phased abolition of the category of multi-purpose workers and suggest their replacement by B.Sc's in Health Science; (2) the rural health programme at the village level may comprise of 3 elements with inbuilt functional links — (a) the regular health programme operated by the Health Agency through its established infrastructure, (b) a programme of health/nutrition insurance cover operated as an integral part of Rural Development/Employment Programme, (c) a preventive and promotive health-care and health education programme operated through the infrastructure of rural schools addressed not merely to school children but to their siblings and parents,—'the school community'.

Basic needs strategy

J. D. SETHI

THE poverty debate in India has gone on for too long without yielding a credible package of policies and strategies to alleviate if not entirely remove poverty. Indeed, poverty has become too serious a problem to be left to statisticians and nutrition experts who have had a field day in derailing the debate. The tragic irony is that some of the best minds are still engaged in measuring poverty even when the overwhelming evidence points to the same levels and directions. In the case of politicians whose hearts bleed for the poor, shamelessness has become a much sought after quality. No other set of programmes has added more to poverty than the 20-point programme.

The question that one should ask is not how many poor live in this country but how much of poverty is deeply entrenched. An even more important question is how many rich and other parasites it takes to keep nearly 400 million people below the poverty line and 150 million destitute. The opposite of poverty is not necessarily wealth. It is a product of the illegitimate acquisition of wealth in a state of prolonged stagnation. If those who control political and economic power have become compulsive thieves and grabbers, no package of strategies can acquire meaning. By what other name can one describe the present rulers?

Except for the Marxists and Gandhians, it is nobody's case that the power elite should not have their privileges or a larger share of the economic cake. Even Marxists have no business to talk against privileges because what is convulsing the communist world is the corruption and excessive privileges

of the party bosses. What the elite have to do is to justify the appropriation of these privileges by their performance, by conforming to accepted norms and, above all, by identifying their interests with the rest of the nation. Without this identification, not only will there be no legitimacy for the rulers but the system would also be discredited and internal imbalances and conflicts rip up even the most coherent ruling coalition. Something like this seems to have happened in India, giving rise to massive parasitism.

Since the power elite cannot be expected to commit suicide, no exercise for removing poverty can succeed if it ignores their interests. But in their own interest, the elite must evolve a built-in mechanism for checks and punishments against the misuse of power and against the emergence of elite imbalances. Those who are looking for radical solutions must realise that only a radical political force can impose such a solution. Nothing of the kind exists today and it will take quite some time before such a force emerges on the political scene.

Therefore, however pusillanimous it may sound, one has to suggest a rather moderate package of policies, until such time as the prevailing decadent system lasts, for meeting the challenge of the massive and immense poverty. It will be sheer demagogery to go beyond the realm of what is possible. Pragmatic idealism should be the guiding principle. The central point is how to weave the interests of the power elite, the removal of poverty, the defence of the nation in general — all into a consistent set of strategies.

India is not the only country to have faced stubborn resistance to any idea for the removal of poverty. Other nations had similar and even worse experiences. This led to all round questioning about the development strategies followed from the fifties through the seventies. No full-fledged alternative strategy has yet emerged which can be pushed through to remove poverty, but partial strategies have found the required support and been put into

operation, in some cases with positive results. One of the reasons why the empirical alternatives remain partial is that the focus remains on a limited number of variables. No economic strategy can succeed if it does not satisfy the needs of the political power elite.

The most significant of all the partial strategies and approaches is called the Basic Needs Strategy (BNS). Notwithstanding that there is yet no clear-cut scope for this strategy, a large measure of consensus has emerged both among the developing countries and the international agencies to support some of the well-identified components of this strategy. The UN system has backed it and the World Bank and other agencies have put up financial support for it.

The Report of the Director General of the I.L.O. summarises the Basic Needs Strategy in the following words: 'Basic needs, as understood in this report, include two elements. First, they include certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption: adequate food, shelter and clothing are obviously included, as would be certain household equipment and furniture. Second, they include essential services provided by and for the community such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport and health and educational facilities.' In practice, not all these subjects have found support. For instance, the food security system has been quietly dropped because food surplus countries have found it a useful political and economic instrument of policy.

Although the ILO-World Bank strategies are not completely oblivious of the fact that without some average growth rate and some macro-economic policy framework, the basic needs strategy, no matter how it is defined, cannot succeed, yet no reference is made to the minimum growth rate required to sustain the BNS. Employment has not been explicitly left out but the ILO has been silenced by other UN agencies. With the exit of McNamara from the World Bank and the rise of Reaganomics, the BNS has been diluted. Once again, those

development strategies have become fashionable which rest largely on the market mechanism, thereby diluting on the way the basic needs programme.

Nevertheless, the BNS still holds the centre of the debate and some nations have put it through imaginatively. But we shall not go into its complex theoretical underpinnings but focus on our own compulsions and experiences.

First, there is a hard-core of extreme poverty even among those who are defined by well-accepted criteria as living below the poverty line. At least, the bottom two deciles of the population constitute this hard-core and, therefore, any strategy which does not give high priority to them is likely to fail. One may even consider the BNS a salvage operation for having a part of humanity which otherwise had been left out of the development strategies and processes. There are enough cynics in this country who from the days of Nehru and Mahalanobis had been saying that nothing could be done about the last two deciles of the population, who were condemned to live and die in destitution. Even if one ignores their insensitivity, the problem still remains about what would happen to their children and their children's children.

Ironically, the destitutes constituted the hard-core of Mrs. Gandhi's what once seemed like unbreakable vote banks. She successfully deceived both the poor as well as the Left. It seems the vote banks are getting fractured now. Mrs. Gandhi can recapture them if she (a) honestly and forcefully gives priority to the BNS; (b) links it with employment strategy and adequate food security system, and (c) allows target groups to become responsible for running the programmes. This strategy will have immediate impact as well as outflank the dreaded politicians and corrupt bureaucrats.

The current 20-Point Programme is a grand deception Mrs. Gandhi has played on the poor of India. She knows very well that these programmes never get delivered to the people. They are deliberately so

organised as to feed and enrich the local power structure and the local bureaucracy, making them political instruments for electoral advantages.

Nothing has been more fraudulent and pernicious than the way the 20-Point Programme has been conceived. It is a pity that the Indian economists have not drawn attention to the fact that the programmes which are made in the name of the poor are really designed to help the rich and, worse still, to wreck the national Plan priorities. The 20-Point Programme has made a big joke of the Planning Commission and its documents and hence the official strategies of development.

Second, in a country like India, poverty is both economic and social. The relevant strategy would deal simultaneously with both; dealing with one only would be self-defeating. The involvement of the poor in national economic development is also a problem of social emancipation. Surely, social poverty has a large economic base but it also has a cultural base.

In the developed capitalist countries, the welfare State represents the equalising mechanism by which the State provides certain social services to those who otherwise, even when employed, may not be able to avail of them. As it happens, these countries also have a well-developed concept of social welfare. In the developing countries, on the other hand, the concept of social welfare is not always clear and resource constraints enhance the difficulty. In the absence of a developed welfare State, the basic needs strategy could provide a starting point for clarifying the social welfare functions.

Third, it is one thing to evolve a proper social welfare function, and suggest a corresponding set of social services, it is quite another to see them delivered to the poor. It is commonly observed that most of the social services in developing countries are appropriated by a small minority even when these services are theoretically available to everyone. The narrowness of the social base and the resultant depriva-

tion of a substantial part of the population, require that essential social services such as education, health and nutrition should be made available to them on a discriminatory basis. Equality of opportunity is not a suitable principle for delivering these services to the poor. If social poverty is to be alleviated, policies have to be framed which will make these services available to the poor on a discriminatory basis.

The Indian power structure, both central and local, is inimical to the interests of the poor and the underprivileged. The BNS programmes could serve as building blocks for democratic and participatory development. If they are adequate and the target groups fully involved with them, then a restraining impact on the local power structure would inevitably follow. Any change could only be in favour of the poor through new phases of local democratisation. It is not argued that the BNS alone can change the existing power structure. It is one additional method by which the necessary changes can be brought about.

In a sense, we are back at the problem with which we began, namely, that it is not enough to have a well-designed and internally consistent anti-poverty programme. We need a responsible power elite which would not merely pay lip service to the poor but would be genuinely committed to them. It is not that all the top decision-makers are evil men. To some extent, they are caught in a system which is corrupting. It seems that one way of creating confidence among the poor as well as making the decision-makers perform better is precisely to let as many programmes of the basic needs strategy be run by the target group people themselves. Education, health and similar other social service programmes are best run by the people themselves.

Therefore, the power elite will have to be convinced about two political steps to be taken in this direction: (a) it would require political and constitutional devolution not only from the Centre to the States but further down from the

States to the local bodies. The argument that the local power structure will always be inimical to equity is relevant to a static, non-democratic situation and will be so if elections are not held to local bodies. In fact, the pressure of democratisation at the grass-roots is the only guarantee against the misuse of power by the local bosses; (b) it requires a high degree of programme decentralisation. To achieve this, the direction of development will have to change to become a bottom-upward movement. Community participation, therefore, becomes an essential criterion for the success of a BNS and for grass-roots development, requiring definite policies. Indeed, the programmes will have to be so structured as to make the community take full responsibility for running them.

Fourth, if the population is increasing at the rate of 2.5 per cent and there is a large demographic concentration in the country, it does not require a new economic theory to prove that unless employment increases at a very fast rate, no strategy can succeed. Therefore, the main thrust of the BNS should be to enable those who live below the poverty line and are unemployed or underemployed, to be physically and skill-wise equipped to enter the productive labour force. In fact the BNS has to become a powerful support both to generate a high level of employment and push up the growth rate. Besides being politically beneficial for the political elite, the employment strategy has to be brought to the centre of the development strategy if the prevailing economic stagnation is to be removed. Paradoxically, economic stagnation results from the import of new technologies without local R&D and adaptation. This brings into question the formation of appropriate technology for labour intensive projects and the right kind of priorities given to them in industrial policy. It is amazing that those responsible for formulating our technology policy have never taken into account the employment objective, let alone the removal of poverty.

Fifth, even if the income of the poor is increased either through

increase in employment or rise in wages, they may still remain handicapped if they are obliged to spend a large part of their income on health and education, because the services remain totally market oriented, structured as they are at present in favour of the rich. The BNS would require the spread of these services to those areas where new employment is being generated and the services made available to them either free or at reasonable cost. Policies and programmes have to be suitably amended to meet the need of these target groups.

Sixth, our experience of utter failure in checking population growth is a harsh commentary on our development strategies. It is no accident that we have poverty and high population growth as well as high unemployment and low productivity. If, for instance, the poor are denied primary health care, thereby keeping infant mortality high, productivity low and employability less marketable, it does not require great theorising to conclude that the BNS can become a necessary catalyst between poverty removal and population control. The package of economic and social policies must be so prepared as to give economic support and psychological confidence to the poor.

Seventh, the strategies of the past two decades have assumed a certain trade-off between the present and the future in favour of the latter. This has led to a neglect of the present day population. The problem has been compounded further by increase in population. The BNS aims at distributing the burden of development between the present and the future more equitably by suitably adjusting the allocation of the basic needs to the present generation as well as protecting those young people who have yet to grow up to the employment age.

At some point, the BNS has also to be linked both to the macro and sectoral patterns and flows. It is possible to speak of the BNS as a short term strategy to support whatever is the investment plan but, in the long run, unless the two are integrated in a way in which the economic and social capacities of

the hard-core of those who live below the poverty line are increased, the BNS will become counter-productive. Investment in physical capital and investment in human capital have to be taken as one programme so far as the target groups are concerned. The main emphasis has to be as much on consumption transfers as on investment transfers with a continuous incremental inclusion of the target groups on which the BNS would be concentrated.

Finally, the international projection of the BNS has been dominated by those who have separated this strategy from employment and growth. The gap has not been unintended. The provision of the very first basic needs such as food, water and clothing are directly related to employment and a relevant growth pattern. The second set of needs which are social needs are also indirectly linked to the latter in the context of making people more employable, in proving their skills and productivity, reducing inequalities and ensuring social justice or people's involvement in development. However, if employment is given the highest priority, it will result in the drastic rupture of the relations between the developing nations and the developed world. That is why the ILO became silent after its initial and correct approach to the BNS.

There has been suspicion that the World Bank and other international agencies opted for the BNS in order to reduce the obligation of the developed countries in their contribution towards the development process of the developing nations. Most BNS programmes are by definition labour-intensive and do not require large international aid. Why should one worry about it. It is illogical to talk of self-reliance and then reject a strategy which by definition does not require external assistance.

Nevertheless, so long as the BNS is kept outside the framework of restructuring of the new world economic order, it will militate against the attempts of the developing nations to industrialise themselves appropriately and to lay the

foundations of a strong infrastructure. If divorced from high and relevant growth, the BNS can become a new mechanism by means of which the ruling elite of the developed and the developing countries would combine to keep the poor where they are. It is no accident that the international agencies are attempting to make the BNS programmes capital-intensive, thereby tilting them in favour of the rich and thus discrediting the whole strategy.

Although the Basic Needs Strategy now is generally accepted in one form or another, actual programmes and policies of such a strategy are not available on the shelf. Indeed, without a policy-framework it is not possible to determine the relationship of the basic needs strategy to the other strategies. Another implication of the BNS is to establish a suitable machinery which identifies basic needs and target groups.

The most important policy implication is target setting. The credibility of target-setting suggests that the targets must not be too high to make their attainment unlikely in a given time horizon or to make it politically unacceptable. The targets must also not be too low to have no more than a marginal impact. In a country where half the population is living below the poverty line, it is not easy to set the targets for everyone because of the resource constraints.

Targets to be meaningful have to have a time dimension. A proper time-frame of the BNS programmes and policies needs to be set for both the policy-makers and those who are expected to be brought into the development processes. It is obvious that the most vulnerable section will have to become the first target group to be dealt with and in the shortest possible time. An official evaluation of the Antyodaya programme has proved its utility. Mrs. Gandhi was being politically mean to the poor to have discarded it just because it had been started by the Janata.

In the meantime, others will be entering the active labour force and

requiring minimum support for their productive mobilisation. It has been noticed that it is not easy to set targets and even more difficult to reach them because they are spread over wide areas and numerous social and economic groups. Targets will have to be enlarged continuously to achieve full coverage. Therefore, policies would be required which structured the BNS for each stage of development and for different target groups.

Since the same target groups may be requiring different components of the basic needs, the administration of the BNS assumes a crucial role. At present, in most developing countries, particularly India, most of these programmes are administered by different ministries and departments. The programmes are so compartmentalised that one department does not know what the other is doing. At the local level, departments not merely refuse to cooperate with one another but positively block each other's activities.

The most important aspect of the BNS is that if the target groups are the same and each one of the different programmes are meant for them, then the whole set must be conceived and designed as a package. Besides, a package can be delivered as a package only by an agency or a set of agencies which have the power to coordinate their activities. Linkages are required at all levels of policy making from top to bottom.

Although the draft Sixth Plan had recognised that all the social service programmes of the BNS such as education, health, housing, drinking water etc., should be integrated, there is yet no policy framework available for their integration. At present each programme is separately organised in a vertical bureaucratic system from the Centre to the States and the local bodies. A corrupt bureaucrat or a politician or some busybody is always there to short circuit it. It is common experience that a programme requiring an input from another department has often been refused to those who administer a

given programme or vice versa. Without integration of the BNS programmes it would be difficult to achieve optimisation.

The Indian experience as well as the experience of some other countries tells us that the best way to administer the BNS is to make it community oriented. Without the involvement of the community, the programmes get bureaucratised and remain at a distance from the people. The relationship between the bureaucracy and the masses has been found to be not very conducive to peoples' participation and thus to establishing the credibility of the economic programme.

However, it is easier to talk about community involvement, but it is difficult to devise policies for the organisation of the communities to undertake basic needs programmes. The organisation of the rural poor has been mentioned in the Sixth Plan but policies have yet to be evolved which would make this organisation possible. Besides, the State cannot take upon itself the task of organising the poor. The power elite will never do that but under certain conditions it may agree to hand over some programmes to the beneficiaries to run.

Any programme included in the BNS has to reckon with existing structures, such as the prevalent educational or health structures. If the idea is to make primary healthcare or elementary or adult education available to those who are deprived of these, it would require certain changes in the entire structure of health, education etc. It has been found that it is not easy to bring about structural changes without breaking down the resistance of vested interests. In most developing countries the poor pay for the health and education of the rich.

Resistance to structuring of these social services is not surprising. Therefore, policy implications for the BNS are not merely confined to BNS programmes but have a bearing on the related social services structure. It is not possible to make the basic needs strategy succeed if the

existing inequitous social services structure is allowed to continue. However, where total restructuring is not feasible, policies will have to be evolved which will be both incremental and structural at the same time.

The following issues are relevant for the optimisation of the BNS:

- (a) What should be the unit of planning for social services?
- (b) Is the present machinery and the proposed one by the Dantwala Committee at the block level adequate for the planning and implementation of social services?
- (c) What are the linkages between the various schemes among the social services requiring integration?
- (d) What is the nature of involvement of the local community in planning resource mobilisation and implementation?
- (e) If Panchayat Raj institutions are to be involved in this programme, what statutory powers must be devolved to them?
- (f) What should be the mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and programme modification?
- (g) How could the universities and research organisations be associated with this programme?

All these questions would require a very detailed analysis of numerous programmes, policies and strategies. Correct policy choices for the BNS will rest on knowledge about other complementary strategies. For example, for any full employment strategy it is necessary to know how the wage goods, particularly food, would be provided and how much of the social basic needs would be needed as an input. Policies for the BNS should not run counter to policies designed for achieving other objectives, nor should the resources be wasted in the name of social

development by their large scale transfer for consumption to the higher income groups. Therefore, what we need is a package of strategies fully integrated, once national priorities are decided. The package would consist of the following.

First, the development strategy in poor countries, particularly where the demographic situation is explosive, must have individual or family employment as the focus, the main thrust. The employment strategy must cut across all social systems, models of social systems, models of social transformation, property relations, production and distribution structures, etc. In other words, full employment should be given the highest priority. Planners should have freedom to choose between a wide spectrum of other strategies of change and development that reinforce the employment strategy.

Second, since the first protective wall against the mental and physical deterioration of the poor, particularly women and children, is an adequate food security system, there should be both a national and international food security system. Even the best conceived security system is unlikely to make a dent into the problem of malnutrition if it is not linked with the objective and priority of achieving full employment. There is enough food in the world and much more can be produced to sustain a high growth rate in employment in all countries.

But, there is not enough food in the country despite claims to the contrary. Demand and supply are able to clear the market at the prevailing prices because most of the poor are outside the market. But food can be used to produce more food. India experienced a remarkable, though limited and short-lived, programme which came to be known as the Food for Work Programme. This succeeded in providing, and in a short period, employment, generating additional food supplies and creating social awareness about the problems of development. The focus was kept on those social structures which had been neglected in the rural areas where most of the poor live. Assets were created with the help of additional

food supplies which were given in the form of wages.

Most significantly, additional food supplies can be used to produce more food by creating that agricultural infrastructure, particularly irrigation, by means of which food production can be increased. In other words, a Food for Work Programme can become self-financing as well as an instrument for additional income and employment to the poor thus making a big dent in the income inequalities and poverty.

Last though not least, the programme ensured the protection of the poor against growing malnutrition. Without a political food security system, which will never be created in this country, unless the Food for Work Programmes become a national programme, there is no hope for breaking the poverty barrier in the short run. One does not understand why Mrs. Gandhi decided to scuttle the programme when she came to power the second time. One would have thought that she would enlarge it and make it an integral part of her anti-poverty programme. It seems that she has a vested interest in maintaining poverty because it is in destitution that her vote banks lie.

Third, the protection of weaker sections requires certain minimum provisions for common social services such as health, education, housing, safe drinking water, etc. In recent years, there has been considerable emphasis on enlarging these common social services, which remain insufficient and un-integrated at either end. They are not integrated with other development strategies such as growth, employment, industry etc., on the one hand, and with the delivery of these services to individuals and families, on the other. Both need to focus on and support those destitute individuals and families for whom the employment strategy can make sense only if and when nutrition and health support is available. At least the bottom two deciles of the population belong to this category. A powerful social services structure would be needed to help them stay in employment and improve their productivity.

Fourth, we need to take a second look at the problem of international financial, intellectual and technical inputs into the problem of anti-poverty programmes. There is no denying the technological inputs required for development. There is no denying that some of the international agencies like UNICEF and WHO have been trying to help nations develop the right kind of programmes. Since their resources and efforts are concentrated on the first stage, the results have not been very exhilarating.

However, the other UN agencies like the IBRD, IMF, UNDP, etc., have succeeded in distorting development strategies of all the developing nations in such a way that the poor will remain poor and all the benefits will go to the elite classes. It seems now that the UN system has expanded and proliferated so much that it has developed a vested interest in maintaining the present international economic order.

Only if we look at the problem as the problem of our survival and not merely as a matter of charity or philanthropy from one country to another, can we see it in the right perspective. It is no more than paternalising, if not arrogance to imagine that rich adults, whether in the poor countries or in the rich countries, can solve the problem of the poor by leaving the general problem of poverty, inequality, exploitation, untackled.

A dogmatic cynic can surely accuse me of suggesting a soft option like the Basic Needs Strategy at a time when the situation is desperate and needs desperate solutions. I am deliberately suggesting a soft option because neither the ruling power elite is ready or willing nor are the masses organised to go in for the hard options. No development strategy will succeed or make sense if it does not reach the poor. The situation may be Marxian or Gandhian but where are the Marxists or the Gandhians? Incidentally, if Mrs. Gandhi desires to rule a little longer, with legitimacy, credibility and honesty, the BNS is the right course, for she has played out every other strategy.

Dry farming priorities

ISHWARBHAI PATEL

THE green revolution which the nation witnessed was supposed to have provided near self-sufficiency in food-grains. But, this 'self-sufficiency' was merely a reflection of the incapacity of a large number of people to buy the food necessary for their nutrition. They did not get even two square meals a day. Besides malnutrition, this also indicates abysmal poverty, this lack of consuming power at the base of our society. The green revolution needed costly inputs and irrigation and, therefore, was adopted by the upper strata of farmers, while 80 per cent of the area under cultivation in India remained dependent upon the rain for good crops.

Similarly, a vast majority of the farmers are also dependent upon dry farming and their other limitation is that they are mostly small

and marginal farmers. If we really want to bring this large population above the poverty line, it is necessary that more attention now be paid to research and extension leading to higher production in the rain-fed areas. This is possible if an intensive extension activity in agriculture is organised on the foot-hold of research. The 'lab to land' programme was designed to help small and marginal farmers by demonstrating more food production on individual plots. Even if we raise this production by 25 per cent, it would mean a great increase in the total production of the country and would also help small and marginal farmers in leading a slightly better life.

When we talk of agriculture for these small and marginal farmers in the rain-fed areas, we have also

to be clear that agriculture includes animal husbandry. If the two progress simultaneously, the chances of prosperity are much brighter.

It is interesting that a recent survey in the U.S.A. indicated that mechanisation in agriculture is capital intensive, energy intensive and debt intensive. With the rising prices of oil and spare-parts, most of the farmers are in heavy debt but those who pursue agriculture with animal husbandry in the U.S.A. are on a sounder economic footing.

To accelerate the development of agriculture as well as animal husbandry in the dry farming areas, I suggest the following action programme.

1. Water harvesting.
2. Inter/multiple cropping.
3. Moisture retention/water conservancy.
4. Cheap natural manure/gobar gas manure.
5. Fodder production/fodder banks.
6. Tree produce/creeper vegetables using trees and fences.
7. Improve seeds, improve farming techniques based on age-old practices / improve animal strains/fodder trees.

When it rains, much of the water runs away from the farms. What is necessary is to have a massive programme of farm ponds amidst a farming area plus water pits in every farm corner. These farm ponds will be useful in keeping the crop alive when there is a dry spell after the sowing. The water pit can help in keeping the seedlings alive. These farm ponds can also provide the silt which is one of the best natural manures for regenerating the fertility of the soil. The silt can be lifted when the pond is dry during the summer season. These water ponds can also be linked to small rivers in the rural areas where most of the rain water in the shallow rivers drains away.

China and Russia have very effectively utilised this water in the shallow rivers by digging hundreds of ponds and linking them to the

river with drains so that when it rains, the ponds become full of water and the river does not get flooded. This is possible by diverting the money that we spend in building big dams, to creating small ponds and lakes linked to the rivers as well as in the midst of dry farming areas. This system will also keep the underground water resources quite charged and the level will be such as to permit having wells and tap the underground water resources. This system will also restore the ecological balance by nourishing trees on the banks and permitting marine life. Seepage losses in many farm ponds can be reduced by plastering the bottom by mixtures of a 15-cm layer of soil plus cow dung plus straw in the ratio of 7:2:1.

For dry farming areas, mono cropping is not desirable. We can have it in the irrigated areas. For dry farming, we can have inter cropping as well as multiple cropping so that in pearl millet we sow *guar*, *arhar*, *moong* and other pulses. If rainfall is heavy and the pearl millet crop does not give a good harvest, the same can be compensated for by the *rabi* pulses crop and if the rain is less, the pearl millet will grow when the existence of pulses will also be beneficial to the millet crop in the sense that the pulses draw nitrogen from the area, providing it to the soil. Hence, a mixture of the two would mean natural fertility.

If we inter crop castor with chillies, what happens is that we have natural biological control on pests. It has been observed that when we grow chillies and castor with one row of castor and half-a-dozen rows of chillies in-between, both the crops help each other in growing, and they do not permit pests to flourish on a large scale but help germination of each other on a large scale. We can have such inter cropping of ground-nut-castor, ground-nut-pigeon pea, cotton-green-gram and the like depending upon the crops available in the area.

The most advantageous or beneficial mixture of cropping will have to be devised on the basis of experi-

mentation by research stations in the area. These stations can also provide to the farmers information with regard to the proportion of inter cropping in terms of rows, optimum plant population, inter culturing, weeding etc.

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he other necessity is to retain the moisture in the soil once it is dry and to permit plants or crops to conserve the water or moisture that they once had. It has been observed that we can retain the moisture in the soil by a suitable combination of crops, by thinning seedlings within the rows in case of a moderate dry spell, by minimising evaporation losses through the complete removal of weeds, by removing soil cracks through inter culturing or with ridges.

The second aspect of this conservancy is utilising the moisture to the maximum advantage. If rains are received late during the end of September or early October, we can have, for example, relay cropping of sunflower, fodder sorghum, or its ratooning. This can also be achieved through selection of crops possessing a deep root system requiring less water, maturing early and the like. Proper crop geometry can also help in conserving the moisture. This will have to be worked out from region to region on the basis of research and experimentation and then recommended to the farmers.

Chemical fertilisers normally require more moisture. It is, therefore, advisable to recommend for dry farming areas natural manure consisting of cow dung, compost, gobar gas slurry and decomposed leaves and weeds. The basic idea of the fertiliser is to retain the fertility of the soil plus provide nutrients to the crops. One of the limitations of the chemical fertiliser is that it kills the micro-organisms in the soil which keep soil fertility. The natural manure described above will help the growth of micro-organisms including the earth worm. Silt in the ponds or river beds also provides an ideal manure. Some of these manures can be obtained by simply utilising the waste on the farm land.

And now that the portable gobar gas plant is available, the govern-

ment should be advised to provide to the farmers portable gobar gas plants on a yearly lease basis. These plants will not only provide fuel for the kitchen plus lighting but will also give to the farmers the best of manures that can ever be thought of. I would imagine that if we provide 100 thousand gobar gas plants to the farmers in the arid areas in a region, this would prevent the cutting of trees for fuel and, therefore, the money for this can be diverted to growing more trees.

This will also replace the necessity for fertiliser plants. And, as the plant can now be shifted, if a farmer does not make use of the same, the plant can very easily be transferred to some other farmer. But this would be ideal and help the arid areas in getting more suitable manure for the crops plus fuel for their kitchens and light for their small houses. It would also, to repeat, save trees and eliminate pollution.

One of the greatest hurdles in maintaining cattle these days is the scarcity of fodder plus its heavy cost. We have village pastures that exist only in name. These pastures do not have grass for the cattle. I would recommend that a programme of growing fodder on village pastures and hilly slopes and waste lands be taken up on a large scale and a nutrient variety of grass be grown and provided to the farmers at a reasonably low rate and in adequate quantities for proper nourishment of their cattle.

One of the things that we have still to imbibe is that grass also needs manuring. If, therefore, we grow these fodders with proper manuring and on a scientific basis and enough grass is made available to the small and marginal farmer, he would be able to maintain his milch cattle or draught animal in healthy conditions. This would also mean additional milk, additional draught power, and additional income to the farmers. Wherever hilly slopes are available on a large scale, this grass can be harvested and used for fodder banks to serve the cattle in dry spells and seasons.

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One of the neglected areas in agriculture is tree growing on the

fences and in the waste land. The farmer should be encouraged to grow trees which can give him not simply fruit but other produce like seeds and seed stones which produce inedible oil. These trees and fences can also be utilized for growing creeper vegetables. Some of the creeper vegetables also last for 2,4 and 10 years and if utilised for fencing around the small farm they can add to the income of the farmers and give him good vegetables.

There are now fodder trees like *subabul*, *kubabul* and *anjjan* which can give both fodder as well as fuel. These trees do not harm the crops also. If the farmer, therefore, is persuaded to utilise the fence area for growing fodder trees, it can provide both fodder as well as fuel to the farmer. The Central Grass Research Station, Jhansi, has developed a combination of fodder and fuel scheme for arid areas. Such patterns can be evolved from region to region and recommended to the farmers.

The selection of seeds is another important input. Even if you do not have hybrid seeds, from your own harvest you can select those which are big in size and of improved type and use them for your crop, which in itself can increase production. The research stations could produce such selected seeds to provide to farmers. Similarly, timely plant protection measures, land preparation, keeping soil ready for the crop before the onset of the monsoon, dry sowing before the monsoon and the like, may be evolved, keeping in mind that farmers used to certain practices for generations are not unsettled. They have to be assured that the improvements stem from their own age-old practices. This would create confidence. This bridge of confidence must be established between farmer and researcher, each helping the other continuously in providing feed-back. Only such a close association between the farmer and the researcher can brighten the future for dry farming in this country, and help lift the people at the base out of their trauma. Today, India has the capacity in physical terms to do this. Only the will is lacking.

Tribals and sub-plans

ALEXANDER V. VERGHESE

OVER the years since planning began, we have been working out strategies to improve the socio-economic conditions of weaker sections and development for the vulnerable groups. The poor, weaker, peasantry and slum dwellers were the pet subject of discussion for planners, professors and politicians until very recently. Out of gross vacillation or the inability to deal effectively with their problems, the ethos of our national feelings seems to have shifted very recently towards the dearest of our weaker sections, namely, the 'scheduled tribes'.

India is one among the few nations of the world noted for its tribal concentration. According to the 1981 Census, the tribals in India account for 7.18 per cent of the total population or approximately one tribesman for every seventeen Indians. About 80 per cent of them live in remote forest areas and hill-tracks without any access to modern socio-economic inputs.

Although there are ethnographic variations in terms of their 'anthropological identity', most tribals share certain characteristics: nature of rurality, speciality of illiteracy,

economic backwardness and social deprivation. Their standard of living, judged by any measure of income position, calorie-intake, nutritional norms, educational standards and 'physical quality life index' (PQLI), does not fit anywhere within the scope and ambit of the Planning Commission's stylised standards. The employment problem of these communities cannot be discussed in isolation, for most of them are unemployed and a very few are engaged in traditional occupations. Their earnings, apart from the monetary angle, do not even conform to the irreducible minimum necessary for their sustenance. The expert definitions of the 'poverty line' or 'poverty gap' for these groups have yet to be defined or redefined.

Although articles 15(4), 46, 244 (i) and 339 of the Indian Constitution speak of special provisions meant for the administration and control of scheduled areas and tribals therein, for their welfare and protection, except for Commissions and Reports, the executive power at the action level has done practically nothing to improve their socio-economic conditions. Of course, many heroic explanations have been

advanced for their failures, but these do not seem to point to the culpability of tribal welfare departments and their protectors, just as the Harijans (the sons of God) referred to in the special provisions of our Constitution have become a 'sweet means' of exploitation for all who are concerned and connected with their welfare or ill-fare.

Even after three decades of independence, the tribals continue to remain aloof from the general prosperity of the nation and are still in the lowest strata of society. Their way of living is a challenge to modern civilization. They have been subjected to various types of exploitation for generations and their life is characterised by servitude, poverty and misery. Generally speaking, they are still under the clutches of their century-old traditions and injurious customs. They are in the firm grip of a subsistence economy and indebtedness is the average hallmark of tribal existence in India.

The primary object of this paper is to appraise the mode and development of various tribal welfare programmes in India and the shortcomings involved in their functioning as a result of the lack of scientific and objective information among the power structure, lack of interest among their protectors and practitioners, lags in administration and contradictions inherent between tribal needs and government deeds.

The origin of the present day Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP) can be traced back to 1950, when the Government of India initiated the National Extension Schemes (NES) in 1951, with the intention of intensifying the block level development activities to raise the general standard of living of the weaker sections. When the Block level activities became a blockade to the development of the weaker sections therein, a new scheme was reinstated in the name of the Tribal Development Block (TDB) in 1962. These blocks were able to initiate some efforts on the social welfare front of tribals.

34 However, since these programmes were patterned after the development efforts attempted in the earlier periods, they turned out to be

not in tune with the tribal context and culture. But, the experiment over a period of ten years or more proved that the emancipation of tribal communities was a complex process with serious socio-political and economic implications. The powerful feudal and vested economic interests, therefore, had to be fought against and new modes of role relations had to be established to ensure tribal claims.

These sporadic and isolated attempts could have only nominal impact on the welfare of the tribals. When it was found that the agencies created and appointed for tribal development were unqualified and ill-equipped to restrain the exploitation of powerful local forces, the Integrated Area Development Programme (IADP) was baptised in 1972 by the special convocation of the Tribal Development Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs with the consultation of various State level tribal development agencies. But, following the same line of experience as over the preceding years has proved that areas developed without developing the tribals therein cannot succeed. Yet, all of this seems to have got concealed in the new label of Sub-plan Scheme for Tribal Development (SSTD) in 1976, without defining the area coverage and plan objectives.

Of very late, the new Sub-plan under the main plan (of State and Union Government) started functioning in almost all States under the new name of *Integrated Tribal Development Projects* (ITDP) without 'project officials' to control, direct and manage the development activities of the various State and Union Government Departments. According to the new strategy, '*Area Sub-Plans*' comprising several projects are prepared for each such 'sub-plan area'. For each one of these projects, an '*Integrated Area Development Programme*' (IADP) focussing attention on the specific problems of the tribal people in that area has been formulated.

Consistent with the norms and directives of concerned departments, the Pilot Report, Preliminary Report, Primary Report, Pre-revised

First Draft Report, Revised Confidential Report and Final Reports (strictly confidential and official) were prepared in all States. The State Planning Boards and Tribal Welfare Departments were entrusted with the task of preparing periodic reviews and studies on 'specific problem oriented tribal development issues'. Inspired by the heavy budget allocation for tribal development, the experts in the field were eager to conduct national and international seminars and conferences at the cost of the half-peasants starving tribals.

'Action Oriented' researches were held under the expert guidance of eminent scholars in the field wedded to tribal life and dedicated to the welfare of the weaker sections of society. Resultantly, the volume of 'Reports' increased at an alarming pace along with the number of Institutes and 'Directors', Joint Directors, Deputy Directors, Additional Directors, Assistant Directors; Acting Directors and Special Executive Directors. But, at the end of it all, the truth is sad indeed for the only comment that can be made is: 'poor are my tribals, rich are their protectors'. This is the net result of the welfare programmes. And it is a fact that the more the plans, the more are the tribals moving from 'poverty to absolute pauperism'. What they needed is not expert seminars, comprehensive reports or directives from ministers and ministries but a time bound solution to their century old socio-economic problems with which they are struggling. Nevertheless, credit does go to the planners for what they have planned, rather than for what they have been able to do.

It is a fact that in all ages those who think must act for and govern those who toil for them. The people at the grass roots level must feel proud of their more fortunate countrymen whose vision and learning can be of benefit to the more unfortunate masses. But, the most distressing fact of our present day nationalism is that instead of the elite and educated community representing the 'brain and consciousness of a nation' as the legitimate spokesmen of the illiterate masses — their dreams, the custodians of their interest — we

have become acutely anxious to exploit whenever and wherever possible.

Now we are aliens within our own national boundaries, strangers to each other and even to our own people. The ideas and beliefs of the nation are not shared by the masses or the people at the lower rung of the ladder, but only by a small class of affluent few for whom there is nothing more appealing than acquisition at any cost. They are clear about their own ends but not the means, thus shattering the fond dreams of the destitute millions who recoil with horror and dismay at what is generated by the liberal leaders of our political economy.

We are taught to be obedient to the 'law of the land' but not to be against the power of the few. We are taught that the 'law will take care of us', but not who will take care of the law — the masses or the mighty few? If the achievement of political freedom is a proven historical and necessary event, the achievement of economic freedom is the natural right of every human being, a matter of the utmost urgency.

The genuine question that arises now is: should the government of the country be left to the elected representatives of the minority (in the factual sense) of their own party without any ideology to represent the masses? Should planners for development, appointed by experts of those representatives who are totally divorced from the feelings of the masses, make plans? Can national planning become the plaything of charlatans and quacks? Should it be reduced to the level of street demonstrations and conspiratorial meetings? Even then, the masses are supreme. They must be trusted to define their economic objectives and to work for their strategies of development. The theories and models must become relevant to their needs and not objects for 'soap-bubble oratory' lest our development theories degenerate into a twentieth century off-shoot of nineteenth century imperial-legality.

When social thinking is tardy and parochial, the power structure tends to keep an ambivalent attitude to

institutional changes. This fact is evident in many fields of the development process in India. Thus, the social thinkers always become the worst enemies of a society which lives on the wages of exploitation. Pretence of action is worse than inaction. Inaction generates resistance and pretence distrust. Thus, there is a fundamental difference between organized resistance and organized distrust. Both lead to conflict. But the latter invariably introduces an element of perversity. When programmes of development are initiated without certain institutional changes, one of the inevitable outcomes to begin with, is the strengthening of already entrenched social interests. This is what is happening in the case of tribal development in India. It is a game without rules. The brave words of the Planning Commission, except for sentimental potentialities, have failed to come to grips with the entrenched interests of tribal planners and protectors.

The party in power was unable to create any new and more effective instrument for the implementation of its social and economic policies than 'the crushing bureaucratic machinery' which has proved unsuitable beyond all doubt. In this context, advocacy of radical policies at the highest level of plan action does not get translated into fact. In fact, as policy declarations become more radical, the gap between the preaching and the practice becomes strikingly evident. So it is wiser to retreat to 'realistic plans' rather than 'radical phraseology' to which partymen are heroically accustomed. Therefore, it is not surprising that the present mode of development which has been stimulated over the years can only meet with failure.

The positive discrimination policy of the State on behalf of the disadvantaged groups and weaker sections of the society is the most effective way to help the tribals and weaker sections enter the modern mainstream. However, the quasi-structural frame, when linked with abstract development theories with an inbuilt institutional flavour, can only thwart the various measures for poverty eradication. The feasi-

bility of measures of development through the super-imposition of democratic institutions on a non-egalitarian social structure, is questionable; it stems from cynics and quacks, really, who believe in the self-percolation effect of the benefits of development towards the lower strata of the society. Such practice based on abstract theories has proved that well intentioned State intervention often ends up in accomplishing the very opposite of the objectives laid out in the plans and proposals. Any number of solutions to the problem of economic development of weaker sections in areas perennially handicapped by basic infrastructural constraints, coupled with gross financial misuse, organisational impotence, incorrect priorities and faulty identification processes will only help to aggravate the socio-economic tension which prevails within the backward tribal regions. Finally, the eruption of violence and bloodshed, in whatever form that we see in India, is not an accident but the inevitable outcome of the development experience.

Over the last three decades, now, we have been planning, doing research and making policies for positive State intervention towards the most obviously disadvantaged groups in the society. But, by and large, the sad truth prevails that by now the lack of political will has been amply demonstrated and gaps exist between the policy and the legislation, between the law and its implementation. Perhaps, there is no sphere of government action in our country which has shown such a deep hiatus between precept and practice as in the domain of planning for the weaker sections and socially deprived groups.

Despite all our integrated plan programmes and concerted efforts, the tribals still remain mostly disintegrated within our society. Unfortunately, planners are yet to define how to integrate and what to integrate, and why at all to integrate, if integration is a self-permeating process of economic development. But, it provokes us to think that if disintegration is the basic concealed objective under the

disguise of integrated development, then nothing could be better done.

To bring the tribals into the mainstream of modern life, still a large gap has to be made up. But it is a reality that the tribals are much more socio-economically isolated and even if development is ensured, they are often dragged into sub-proletarian servitude by the reactionary forces of a society which lives on the wages of exploitation. The statutory reservations, discriminations, special provisions, guarantee of minimum needs etc., as a means of social change is, no doubt, a welcome approach. This will bring about changes in educational programmes, occupational mobility, cultural conditioning, redistribution and would also raise the overall competitive level of disadvantaged groups in what they are able to attain by their own effort and means.

No doubt, schemes and special provisions are obviously a help towards this end; but in the absence of comprehensive remedial measures to check the filtration processes of exploitative organs, they can only lead to social conflict and structural dislocation within already wounded social patterns. The reality is that the tribal plans in appearance look elegant and egalitarian, but the conspired practise makes the approach shabby and inequalitarian as now the areas of elite catchment have widened to enlightened towns of 'integrated social groups'.

Most alarming of all, the special provisions have so far only ensured representation for the people who are in the power structure, who help to perpetuate the stratification in the social organisations. What is fundamentally wrong with the tribal development programme is a lack of awareness of the social dimension, and the stunted vision on what needs to be done and how. So, the tribal development strategy calls for a change and reshuffle in the administrative structure towards those on whose behalf it is supposed to function. Otherwise, the proposals can only buttress social fragmentation. So the existing measures to improve the socio-economic condition of tribals must dissolve into a cohesive

whole of the society of which the whole is larger than the sum of its parts. But the question is how to dissolve and what are the norms of division. Even otherwise, the virtual exclusion of wider objectives and substitution of temporary devices is only a conditional measure which makes the returns negative through short sighted and misconceived policies which are objectively questionable and practically refutable.

Now, the seminal questions that arise based on the observation of various tribal development schemes and programmes are the following.

1. Is there any correlation between the needs of the tribals and the various development programmes meant for them? If not, why?
2. Is there any systematic record available with any department of what it has done so far for the tribal welfare in terms of physical targets achieved? If not, where are all these records?
3. Is there any competent authority with due power to check, cross-check and evaluate the achievement and failures of the various tribal development programmes and any body or organisation to assess the viability, suitability and practicability of the various tribal development schemes in India? If not, why?
4. Why is there so much inter-departmental duplication and overlapping in terms of tribal development schemes among different departments. What is the ultimate and ulterior objective in vagueness in definition of the schemes?
5. Why doesn't the government bring all such development schemes under a centralised organisation with due power and authority to manage and execute the various tribal development schemes?
6. Why is there lapse of funds at every annual verification of funds that are ear-marked for tribal development programmes?
7. What is the sum total of allocations made for tribal welfare schemes since planning in India?
8. Why have we not yet done any cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis of various tribal development schemes?
9. What is the criterion which governs the identification of beneficiaries of tribal development schemes? If at all there is any, is it really practised?
10. Why are budget allocations for various tribal development schemes sanctioned for implementation only by the end of the financial year?
11. How many tribals have actually benefited so far despite the pursuit of development programmes and by how much?
12. What is the rate of appropriation allowance permissible under the relevant rules for tribal development agency officers? Is it below the basic pay or beyond? Is there any upper ceiling limit to it? Why does not the government pass a bill in respect of sanction with retrospective effect?
13. Can the problems of tribals be solved through the expert seminars and symposia without their actual participation?
14. What is the sum total of what has so far been spent for seminars and conferences on tribal development since independence?
15. Has the government ever conducted any disability survey on tribals? If not, why?
16. What will happen to tribals through the present mode of tribal development?
17. Will the present mode of spoon-feeding cure their basic problems of existence?
18. Who is a tribe? If we go by the terms of the constitutional provisions, is the accident of birth a mistake of the individual!
19. What is the pious object of tribal development?
20. Finally, who will bear the cost of the tribals' dependency?

Structural constraints

B. C. MUTHAYYA

DEVELOPMENT implies a progressive change from an existing situation to a new one. The rural development programmes designed and implemented have the following implications: (1) improving the living standards of the people, more specifically the weaker sections; (2) encouraging the participation of people who are beneficiaries of the programme in the developmental process; (3) making this process self sustaining through the development of required skills and capabilities among the people, and organising people's institutions at different levels.

One of the major constraints in the implementation of programmes is the existing social structure and the resulting differentiation of targetted groups, viz., weaker sections classified either on economic criteria like land holdings into small and marginal farmers and landless labourers or, currently, those below the poverty line based on income or according to caste into scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and backward class. These people, due to some accident, have come to be labelled as socially disadvantaged, the under-privileged, the poor people, the weaker sections and so on.

This labelling process has set in motion processes which have strengthened the social differentiation, whatever may be the noble objective for doing it, and children of these groups imbibe this heritage and perpetuate this categorization and thereby the structure gets strengthened from time to time. It is believed that once a person is labelled, these labels set social processes in motion which turn them into reality. Therefore, the question arises whether there is any possibility of these groups of people trying to undo this labelling and set out counter forces in order to break this hierarchical differentiation into an horizontal one, where sharing of facilities, services and benefits will not be based on concepts like 'top to bottom flow', 'trickle down effect' but on mutual appreciation, goodwill and participation.

This may sound like an utopian dream but efforts in this direction are a necessity if our concern is the eradication of poverty and improving the quality of life of the people at the base. One of the basic constraints could be their present economic condition which does not ensure the satisfaction of their basic necessities. Clearing that would reduce their helplessness, their dependency on those above them, thereby generating the impulse to be self-dependent which is a pre-requisite for development in the true sense of the term.

The hierarchical structure is not something new. It is perhaps woven into the fabric of our social life itself. Hierarchical relationships prevail in the family, with an ordering of father, mother, sons and daughters (wonder whether the women fighting for their emancipation in the women's era will upset this order!) and at the social level, based on caste or class or wealth, and education and so on, which is again ordained as high or low caste, rich or poor, educated or uneducated and so on. This hierarchical cultural heritage has made incursions into the organisations created for administration or social service or for bringing about people's participation.

The organisation, created by government or otherwise, is always based on a superordinate-subordinate-relationship; one would have to look for one's position in the organizational hierarchy to decide the potentiality in terms of position, power or locus of authority. It appears as if the society is ordained in the hierarchical fashion, influencing the delivery of services in the same order which not only facilitates but nurtures the dependency of those at the bottom upon those at the top. It is ironical that one hierarchical system is making attempts to undo the other hierarchy — the administrative or institutional hierarchy trying to unsettle the land owner-tenant or landless labour or bonded labour relation-

ship. This attempt may not result in the traditionally based hierarchy getting unsettled but instead, lead to a compromise for maintaining the status quo. Perhaps, this explains the not very successful attempts at social or administrative reform at the base of our society.

The social structure also has built-in prejudices, discriminations and other mechanisms which block opportunity for those at its lower rungs. The people who occupy positions in the lower social structure are generally illiterate, belong to lower caste groups, exist at a lesser economic level and generally become victims of disease, malnutrition and social violence. Some of the characteristics of the lower social groups in the structural hierarchy are the absence of delayed gratification behaviour, feelings of marginality and helplessness, early marriage and sex, low participation in voluntary organizations and feelings of isolation in the social structure, may be, a sense of alienation.

Their behaviour is also characterised by suspicion, apathy, dependency and conformity, having little social organisation. This results in a thinking and feeling which is different. Their participation in the life situation is influenced by their roles which are vulnerable by virtue of the dependent relationship they have with those who occupy positions in the upper echelons of the social structure. Therefore, it has been said that the poor would rather have the uncertainties of life guided by a fatalistic outlook than the uncertainties associated with new economic ventures.

One of the motivating factors which prevents the poor from taking advantage of economic opportunities is safety. They would rather go through a life which is known or familiar than make a change where the consequences are uncertain. Fear of failure in the new ventures or new roles may deter them from taking advantage of the new opportunities provided to them.

In a study of the rural disadvantaged in one of the States, it was found that a trend towards indifference to the differentiation by caste was prevalent among the majority

of the respondents and a feeling seems to have developed that caste differences would disappear in the course of time, regardless of any effort in this direction. This seems to be a positive feeling among many respondents, which augurs well for the future.

However, when questioned further, their preference for building scheduled caste homes away from the village seems to negate their earlier contention and even the scheduled castes themselves seem to have preferred this segregation. The only inference to be drawn from this result is that people belonging to the lesser caste groups did not in any way seem to be as affected as would be assumed since they felt that they had enough opportunities to compensate for this caste discrimination.

However, a small percentage of respondents among the backward classes and scheduled castes were humiliated when reference was made to their caste. So, one can only indicate the general trend. It is a process of transition from a feeling of subjugation because of the inherent inadequacies and discriminations against a particular caste to one of indifference or pride, as the case may be, in an attempt to discard the prejudices harboured by the particular group because of its social structure. In regard to social distance, here again it was found that the scheduled castes had maintained a lesser social distance than the backward classes and upper castes. In other words, the high caste groups maintained a higher social distance from other caste groups.

In another similar study on this aspect, in two other States it was found that the disadvantaged groups also maintained a higher social distance than the advantaged but their orientation to caste feelings was more marked in one State than in the other. They also rated themselves low in the social order, depicting thereby their social perception of their position in the village situation.

A study covering about eleven countries, revealed some interesting trends in the context of social structures. Those who held positions in

the centre (the top) were 'open minded' but skeptical, they possessed all the intellectual means for reconsidering their strategy, but they were not willing to introduce or accept major changes especially if those endangered their position. On the other hand, it was found that those at the periphery (bottom) were dogmatic, less educated, dissatisfied with their situation but without the initiative to change it, often not even aware of their own interests but eagerly advocating changes which they assumed would imply a development for the better. The 'top' predicted developments and achievements for which they did not show enthusiasm whereas those at the 'bottom' expressed their hopes for what they did not really believe would happen.

The 'top' who were close to the instruments of communication and decision making would be the ones to take initiatives, to plan and appear to be effectively in charge of what had to be done to meet the future. At the same time, those at the 'bottom', convinced that their ideas would not be realised anyhow, would do little to promote them. What they did would matter little anyhow, so long as they did it only at the individual level. One of the major stumbling blocks in the way of united action by those at the bottom is that while they do have quite a bit of change-oriented thinking, it is rarely that the same idea prevails throughout those who constitute the periphery.

These are some observations based on a study across eleven nations which hold true in most of the hierarchical structures. In this context, any socio-economic change planned for groups occupying positions which are economically, socially, or both, vulnerable should take into account their feelings, their attitudes and the role of the structures—social, cultural, political, administrative—in shaping and reinforcing them. Therefore, improvements sought to be brought about among disadvantaged groups of people should not only take measures to unsettle the existing social structure but also modify the attitudes reflecting the dictates of that social structure.

Books

PEASANT MOVEMENTS IN INDIA (1920-1950)

by D.N. Dhanagare. Oxford University Press, Delhi.

EMPLOYMENT PLANNING FOR THE RURAL

POOR: The Case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by P. Hanumantha Rayappa and Deepak Grover. Sterling Publishers, Delhi, 1980.

WARDHA DISTRICT PLAN ON GANDHIAN

LINES: Report of the Sub-Group. Planning Commission, Delhi, 1982.

THE peasantry has always remained an important field of discussion among sociologists and political activists. Analysing the role of the French peasantry after the 1848 Revolution, Marx scathingly attacked it and called the peasants 'a sack of potatoes that lack interconnection, common political identity and organisation.' Engels considered the peasantry a stratified body and thought that it would remain politically impotent unless mobilised by the working class. The contribution of the peasantry to the October Revolution was acknowledged by Lenin and he identified various classes among the peasants. The October Revolution also raised the question of the peasantry's revolutionary potential in social change. But the classical Marxian conceptions of the peasantry were challenged in the Chinese Revolution. Peasants formed a revolutionary force and brought about a social revolution. Mao's writings amply prove that certain classes among the peasantry can also assume the role of leadership.

In the vastly rural societies of what is called the third world, the role of the peasantry in social change forms one of the most important topics of discussion. The experience in these countries also appears to disprove many notions about peasants prevalent in the last century.

Contemporary sociologists like Barrington Moore, Teodor Shanin, Hamza Alavi, Daniel Thorner and many others have commented on the role of peasants and often from differing points of view. There has obviously been confusion over the question of the 'revolutionary potential of the peasantry'.

In an illuminating study of the peasant movements in India between 1920 and 1950, Dhanagare seeks to clear the confusion that still exists. This in-depth study, on the basis of many published and

unpublished materials, also defines the role of the agrarian classes and their potential for revolutionary change.

With an unorthodox Marxist approach, Dhanagare studies the Moplah rebellion (1921) in Malabar, the Bardoli satyagraha, the Telengana uprising and the Tebhaga movements in Bengal. Drawing on the works of Lenin and Mao and the writings of Daniel Thorner, the study classifies the peasantry into five major categories — landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants and landless labourers. He also draws a distinction between the 'lower middle' and 'upper middle' peasant.

Dhanagare defines peasant movements as 'all kinds of collective attempts of different strata of the peasantry either to change the system which they felt, was exploitative, or to seek redress for particular grievances without necessarily aiming at overthrowing the system.' According to him, peasant movements in India took the form of nativistic or restorative upsurges or religious movements or social banditry. They also took the form of mass insurrection of peasants for redress of specific grievances and liberal reformist movements. Terrorism which involves actual use or threat of violence coupled with vengeance and ideas of meting out collective justice was another manifestation of the peasant movements. He thinks that the Telengana movement assumed the character of 'social banditry' and 'terrorism' together with consciously adopted revolutionary ideology.

The strength of Dhanagare's study lies, among other things, in the fact that he disproves Moore's thesis that the limitations of peasant struggles in India grew from the inherent 'passivity' of the Indian peasant or from the peculiar village social structure. Dhanagare argues that the limitations of these movements sprung more from broader political forces at regional, as well as all-India, level and from the colonial status of the country's polity and economy.

He is also critical of the tendency to lessen the historical importance of the peasant movements. 'The achievement of peasant revolts in India, if viewed in the context of their proximate aims, are not as unimpressive as they sometimes appear: each of the movements that we have examined was followed by some legislative or ameliorative measure.'

By underlining the 'revolutionary potential' of certain agrarian classes in India, Dhanagare has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the

nature and method of transformation of society. His book is equally important for the academician as well as the political activist.

Dealing with the same subject — the rural poor — Rayappa and Grover, in sharp contrast to Dhanagare's study, draw a different picture of the peasants, specially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Their study aims at providing 'solutions' to the employment problem of the rural poor without analysing the class structure in society and without questioning the exploitative system of production and unjust distribution of wealth. Rayappa and Grover appear to be calling upon the employers to feed the workers properly, at least on humanitarian grounds, because, they say, 'it has been shown, *ceteris paribus*, that workers better fed by the employers as a part of their emoluments tend to produce greater output than the rest.'

An almost similar attitude can be found in the *Wardha District Plan on Gandhian Lines* of the Planning Commission. The aim of the plan is to ensure that before the end of this decade, no family in the district lives below the poverty line. This aim, according to the plan, would be achieved through the provision of 'Work for all.'

The 'Work for all' programme is sought to be implemented through various agencies like the District Planning and Development Council, the Zila Parishad, the District Rural Development Agency, co-operatives and other voluntary agencies. The plan fails to understand the conflicting class interests among the people of the district. It believes that various agencies dominated by powerful groups would act contrary to their class interests. The plan seems to suppose that the condition of the rural poor can be improved without the active participation of the people in the development processes meant for them. These are the weaknesses of the study which typify most government plans. And that is one of the reasons why the intended results in these plans are hardly ever achieved in India.

S. Mazumdar

BUREAUCRACY AND THE POOR: Closing the Gap, Edited by David C. Korten and Felipe B. Alfonso, Singapore, McGraw-Hill, 1981.

OF late there has been a bountiful crop of field studies depicting the plight of the poor and suggesting measures to make them less poor by building bridges to fill gaps, though one is not sure between whom and how these gaps have to be closed. Good old Marxists of every rainbow hue have been at this game for so long that the time has come now for the empirical realists and pragmatists to take over, after shedding all the old assumptions that the poor will remain poor because they are mentally retarded or do not have the will to improve their lot even if equal opportunities are provided by good old democracies.

'It is always easy to take the beaten path
But the beaten path does not always lead to
where
You want to go' (P. ix).

The path which these pathfinders have trekked across the 258 pages of *Bureaucracy and the Poor* cover no more new ground than the fields that the Indian and African peasants have been ploughing for generations, living, multiplying and dying in debt and misery. There have always been rural Hampdens and tyrants, the latter always enduring the test of time. This bridge of poverty cannot be crossed by such painstaking researches, but needs more radical measures that would shatter the existing state of affairs. Who will do it? Certainly not the egg-heads who write these reports from the cosy studies of their institutions, fed and fattened by foundations, nor by reviewers such as the present one. The poor have always been with us and God is in Heaven and all is well with the world. This book protests vehemently against this smugness but only, as I said earlier, as the tail-enders in this procession of post world war scholars.

It is difficult to do full justice to the volume since it contains disparate articles by scholars coming from different social and cultural milieu, bringing their own experiences to bear upon and demonstrate the virtues of decentralisation, democratic participation, the need for proper social skills among people who implement plans and so on, which one can find in any community development literature which mercifully has now stopped belching forth advice. Read a few speeches of dear departed Nehru, V.T. Krishnamachari, or others like S.K. Dey, Asoka Mehta, or the stackful of literature that was spewed by the various universities on Panchayati Raj, and you have enough and to spare.

'Bureaucracy' has been taken over by the management scientists in their bid to convert every problem into a management problem in the final analysis, thereby, turning it into a non-political problem. Every political problem has to be operationalised into an administrative problem and it has to be further broken down into a management problem and thus there is the possibility of universalising the principles as this book attempts to do with its indifferent articles and divergent themes. The scope of management in effecting this task of 'closing the gap', however, is woefully limited.

It may be mentioned here *en passant* that though the working class in the USA once rebelled against F.W. Taylors 'Scientific Management', Lenin was enthusiastic about its application in the Soviet Union. The backgrounds were different and poison for one was meat for the other. I am saying this because this book, although mentioning it marginally, does not fully recognise the consequences of political play. All the articles, including those by the Indian scholars who ought to know and do know better, have not given this variable the 'place it must occupy in this periodic table'.

It may be legitimately argued by the authors that in such a case the book would have ceased to be one on management but become one on rural politics. Without losing sight of the managerial problems, the play of political elements in the success or failures of the various experiences could be traced in order to make the essays more realistic and more readable. In some countries which have afforded case-studies for this volume, regimes have changed, and with them the management experiences have disappeared or have become old hat.

Four highly favoured management institutions — The Asian Institute of Management, Manila, The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, The Institute Centroamericano de Administracion de Empresarios in Managua, and the Instituto de Estudios Superioris de Administracion in Caracas have all collaborated in bringing out these series of articles with the good Samaritan-like intention to change the lot of many a poor Mang Juans, Ram Guptas, and Pedro Martinez, who are said to make their invisible presence felt in the course of these narrations, as the Foreword by the president of the Asian Institute of Management, G.A. Mendoza, declares.

The Indian studies are rather succinct and fortunately they have spared us the boredom of reviewing the already existing literature on the subjects they have chosen to dilate upon. How does one guarantee that the poor man will not fritter away his income increase in drinking rather than in improving his economic well-being, asks Labdhiji Bhandari in a very revealing study of the 'Poor as Consumers'. Ranjit Gupta's study of the tribal situation is quite interesting though this is only a micro-study and may not be applicable universally. There are some studies on the Tanzanian and Venezuelan experiences which give the administrative management measures that would facilitate better adoption of local and indigenous inputs and maximise the benefits out of the givers. To that extent these are useful if incrementalism is the goal.

In the overview article, the editor, Korten, summarises many of the findings and the burden of the theme is 'participation'. Lots of studies have defined and analysed participation as a key input in all developmental programmes and they, like the present authors of these articles, also lament the lack of participation of the village folk in the various programmes intended for their benefit and, in addition to these, have added other factors like lack of proper communication systems, the dilemma of dependence on the government (*mai-baap* syndrome of the sociologists), over-centralisation, corruption, etc.

All these have that repelling ring of familiarity and repetition. The Balwantray Mehta Report on Panchayati Raj was called 'Democratic decentralisation' which every one chanted like a mantra. That was twenty years ago. We are at the same mile-stone after reading this laborious and boring and there-

fore 'scientific' work. Charts and diagrams which are styled here as 'exhibits' (sic!) give the book the appearance of something on engineering, perhaps 'social engineering'.

If the poor perceive that the programmes are not for their direct benefit but for the use of vested interests in the rural areas, their participation cannot be forthcoming as is proved in the case of Panchayati Raj. A road built by community work is more likely be of use to the rich farmer than to the poor agricultural labourer who can more effectively use his footpath. Rural credit, communications, the extension services, rural health services, the IADP programmes etc., have all gone to the benefit of the privileged in the very name of peoples' participation and grass-roots democracy. That is the skewed logic of the basically exploitative society which one finds in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Though the book makes bureaucracy its target, one feels that there is little on how bureaucracy has to go about it, and whether it can really help bring about social change in the given circumstances. Also, its composition and other important issues have not received adequate attention. We have known about bureaucracies ever since Max Weber classified their characteristics, but what have they achieved in the modern developmental context and what should be done to them if at all to make them not only responsible but also responsive to the poor peoples' needs? How can the people be protected against the so-called peoples' representatives' inroads into fields that legitimately do not belong to them? A few words on this sensitive area would have been more than welcome. Even the Indian scholars failed to do justice to these aspects.

One could read *Bureaucracy and the Poor* to reinforce one's own knowledge with cross-cultural empirical studies — that the bureaucracies, such as they are, cannot bring about anything more than what's marginal by way of filling the gap, that there should be real participation of the people, that in order to achieve this there should be more decentralisation and delegation of authority and that management in the final analysis is man-management.

K. Seshadri

PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, VOL. 2:

Three Studies on the Agrarian Structure in Bengal 1850 - 1947 by the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences. Oxford University Press, Calcutta.

CAPITALISM AND PEASANT FARMING by John Harriss. Oxford University Press, 1982.

TENANTS AND TRUSTEES: A Study of the Poor in Madras by Paul D. Wiebe. Macmillans.

THE second volume to the 1977 *Perspectives in Social Sciences I: Historical Dimension* certainly lives

up to the academic standard that its predecessor has set. The present volume, a product of a seminar held in 1978 within the Centre in which various aspects of the agrarian structure in eastern India were considered, throws light on details of the structural formation and changes in agrarian conditions and society of the Bengal province — through the three monographs by Ashok Sen, Partha Chatterjee and Saugata Mukherji.

Sen's monograph on 'Agrarian Structure and Tenancy' finds its genesis in the rent law legalities of the 19th century which crystallized in the colonial pattern of tenancy regulations. This was the scaffolding within which the rural population was further impoverished and reached the nadir of its economic deprivation coupled with a deteriorating land-man ratio and inelastic revenue demands. Sen's main work here is in isolating the ways in which 'exogenous' influences shaped the declining fortunes of those oppressed by colonialism and, as he very rightly notes, that capitalism over agriculture, though not within it, had in the last resort very few possibilities of growth, let alone development.

The second monograph of Partha Chatterjee on agrarian structure in pre-partition Bengal has analysed the structure of the tenancy holdings, share cropping, rent, etc., and shows differentiation among sub regions and analyses the context in which the emergent structure of Bengal's agriculture created a fission which ultimately led to the development of mass forces weakening regional political will to resist the imperialist Partition of 1947.

Saugata Mukherji in the third (and concluding) monograph considers aspects of the commercialization of agriculture during the last decade of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century. This focus is on the exogenous control which shaped the cropping pattern as well as put the peasantry in the anachronistic Nurkse's vicious cycle. Mukherjee shows how the process of de-industrialisation was carried into the 20th century. While all three studies essentially do conform to the 'nationalist view' in their approach to the problems of the agrarian structure, it is important to realise that whatever the approach that might have been used, the results obtained are authentic. As De in the preface rightly notes: 'The picture that emerges is a grim one, of a profitable agriculture from which the masses reaped little fortune.'

The style of the book, while certainly academic, is lucid and the analysis well presented. The book will no doubt be useful to academicians and the general reader with a special interest in agrarian relations in an historical perspective.

John Harriss' book originated from the author's 'interest' in the green revolution and he hopes that it will stand to be judged as an attempt towards using the structural historical method to analyse the agrarian structure in a part of northern Tamil

Nadu rather than simply an empirically historical approach divided into seven chapters and four appendices. It must be noted that, despite the wide ranging nature of the book, Harriss has succeeded in making his study an application of the method of historical materialism rather than a simple conventional village monograph. Harriss' central thesis is that the capitalist transformation of agriculture as is envisaged by the protagonists of the 'agricultural surplus' view of the Agrarian Question has not occurred in spite of conditions which would appear to have favoured it.

More specifically, he argues that the expanded reproduction of capital in agricultural production is subordinated to that of merchant and finance capital, in a form of economy likened to Marx's 'intermediate' forms of capitalism. Thus, Harriss is of the view that the process of 'differentiation' (a la Shanin) of the peasantry is thus 'blocked' both because of the character of the economy and by the ideological structure of caste and kinship which re-inforces the existing relations of production and power structure.

In the Indian context, the study also examines the inter-caste dynamism and structural rigidities of the caste system and, as Harriss notes, 'The relationship between the processes of material production of a society and ideological structures is intrinsic to the theme of the study which means that the question of the relationship between material production and caste must be raised' — a question that is indeed important to a dialectic analysis of historical structuralism.

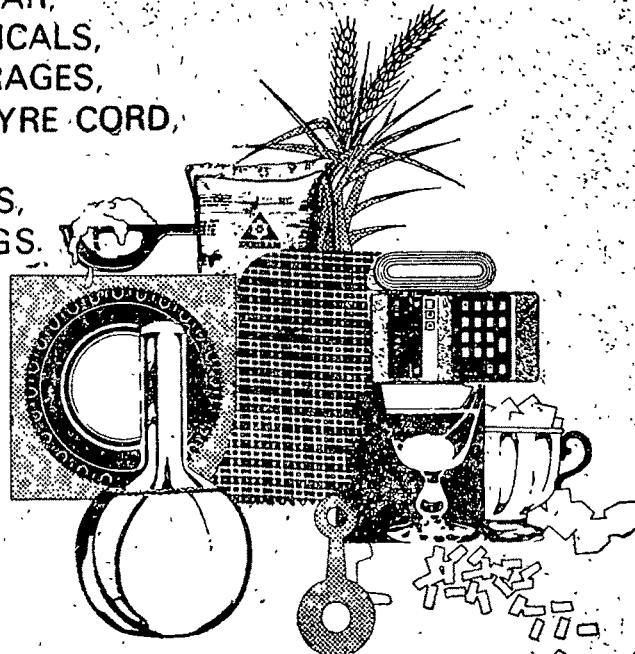
The author, while recognising the limitations of an atomistic approach towards the time-dynamics of agrarian structure, limits his study to the North Arcot District of Tamil Nadu. An analysis of the historical development of the district is the genesis of the analytical process and the description of the Ramdam village and social structure therein provides a good base for the analysis.

Subsequent chapters concern themselves with the description of the analysis of the forces and the relations of production in village agriculture within the limits of environmental constraints. After the rather detailed examination of the 'old' and 'new technologies', the organization and use of labour, Harriss takes up the issue of the determinants of the level of development of the forces of production and subsequently analyses the character of the modes of production. The study is neatly rounded off by a discussion on the process of differentiation of the peasantry.

Essentially, Wiebe's book stems from the author's association with the New Residents Welfare Trust (NRWT) — an associate of the Church of South India. One of the objectives of the study has been to examine how NRWT has functioned and emerged over time in relation to its working throughout. This objective however does not limit the author to a

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narrow path. The book under review, as the dust cover notes, is (probably) the first of its kind in India and would be indispensable to students of urban sociology, social workers and town planners.

In its five chapters and four appendices, the book seeks to build up, in historical perspective, the demographic nature of the town population including the statistics of the urban poor, slum migration and public administrative services. In fact, the first chapter which takes up almost one-fifth of the book is devoted exclusively to the development of the trends and examination of the indices of industrialisation — which while collating all the data conveniently in a single place does not say anything new. Subsequently, chapters on tenements and tenants give a rather empirical account of the dimensions of the problem of the urban poor and the steps taken by the public services in trying to curtail them. The dimensions of the caste problem are also explained in an empirical way — however, unfortunately, the respondent space of the survey is too small to make any valid generalisations. The book ends with an examination of the history and performance of the NRWT and the limitations it works under.

Ajit Prasad

**RURAL MODERNIZATION, CONTRADICTION
AND CHANGE** by R.G. Singh. Intellectual Publishing House, 1982.

IN the third world, it has been in vogue to be concerned with 'development'; in particular with changes levered in existing social structures. As such, the village being the epitome of the traditional social structure, 'rural-India' has been the focus of diverse research attempts in the realm of the social sciences. Almost every apparent and semi-apparent aspect of rural life has been studied: ranging from staid themes like the agrarian structure, inequality, etc., to the more off-beat Freudian analysis of the rustic mind. Considerable effort has been devoted to formulating theories, reiterating the applicability of models existing elsewhere and testing hypotheses — all effort more or less directed at throwing light on problems inherent in rural life, or emerging as a reaction to external forces.

However, it is depressing to note that although such researchers have to a great extent outlined the significant problems, the general awareness they have kindled is only superficial. The fault lies with the very nature of these studies. A majority are attempts to superimpose a preconceived theoretical apparatus on existing social phenomena, and to reinstate models sanctified by different 'isms', oft ignoring the complex character of the Indian society. They are largely academic exercises and very rarely transcend their heritage of academic knowledge or the boundaries of their specific discipline. They tend to concentrate mainly on the manifest and miss out the latent nuances of village life.

These inherent drawbacks together with the preoccupation with 'theory' that prevails, have prevented the sparking off of any real, action-oriented interest in the Indian village (apart from the fiery debates that ensue) which may have made it possible for the latter to rise above the drudgery of its problems.

Modernisation of traditional society is perhaps one of the most over-worked topics today, although it is true that rural-modernisation has been relatively a new area of study. R.G. Singh's work would have been more significant if he had evolved a new way of looking at this topic. He has fallen into the trap of going to the field with pre-conceived notions of modernisation, formulated on the basis of urban modernisation and trying to fit his data to this format. What emerges is similar to the studies preceding it — only the background here is different.

The aim of the author is to explain the nature and process of modernisation in a rural setting with special reference to two villages — Ahmedpur and Jamudih in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. He attempts to work at two levels; at the societal level — to analyse the effect of modernisation in the structure and function of the family, stratification, economic and political structure; at the individual level — to measure modernisation or attitudinal modernity, the interrelation of these two levels and the contradictions that emerge due to modernisation.

To arrive at his conclusions the author has undertaken rigorous investigations in the field, preceded by sustained and detailed incorporation of all existing literature. The latter effort has proved a little misleading and overwhelming for him. It has resulted in his naive and confusing definition of 'modernisation' which he claims is a concept that synthesises Europeanisation, Westernisation, Americanisation and alleviates tensions.

What has also detracted from his conceptualisation of the whole problem is his tendency to segregate different aspects of the 'whole'. For instance, he concedes that there are three aspects of social reality which are mutually related—but while he thinks it fit to investigate trends at the individual and institutional levels he feels that the cultural aspect is out of the purview of the book. A similar gap emerges in his analyses of the different social structures.

Such a study would have been better equipped to measure the changes if historical analysis had been a part of the methodology. Comparison to agreed patterns of tradition are not sufficient to gauge the nature and process of modernisation. In accordance with the perspective chosen and the methodology adopted the conclusions are not very startling. The author has unfortunately chosen too wide a vista for investigation — modernisation has been used as an umbrella term thus making it impossible to deal with any one aspect in detail.

What is however commendable is the body of research techniques used — the sampling and the attitudinal scales all make for a very scientific investigation. And, above all, the book is not the materialisation of arm-chair research, but of very thorough investigation carried out in the field.

Rochita Roy Chowdhury

RELEVANCE IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

RCH: A Colloquium. New Delhi, Vikas, 1982.

ONE of the many legacies of our monarchical past is the view of the State as the supreme audience. In *The Long Revolution*, Raymond Williams points out that an image of society has the power to influence patterns of thinking and decision-making. 'You start with the King,' he says, 'or from the existing social order, and then everything that happens is related to that.'

In a society such as ours where monarchical patterns of thought and behaviour coexist with the demands of democratic order, one often comes across the tendency to regard the State apparatus and society as one. People involved through teaching or research in the development of social sciences express this tendency when they point out that the needs of State policy are valid criteria for judging the worth of any new knowledge of society.

Several of the essays anthologized in this volume explicitly categorize social scientific knowledge into 'policy oriented' and 'basic' or 'theoretical'. They claim that the first category has conventionally been regarded as 'relevant' research. V.K.R.V. Rao writes: 'What is relevance? The interpretation usually given to this concept in this context is that it must lead to or help in finding policy prescriptions for the problems with which the person or authority concerned is confronted within the social and economic fields and for which he is trying to find solutions.'

Surely, Rao and others cannot be wrong in identifying a convention. A reader of this volume would reasonably expect at least some of the contributors to analyse the convention (Where did it originate? What does it imply?) or treat it as problematic. Not one does. Presumably, it is not a 'usual' thought in the social sciences in India that the relevance of a State policy itself cannot be taken for granted, and that if one found 'irrelevance' in policy, then one cannot expect to find relevance in the social research which provided a basis or support for the policy.

It is of course convenient to choose a fixed point of reference such as 'State policy' in order to determine something as elusive as 'relevance' of new knowledge or research. The choice settles many otherwise nagging questions, e.g., how was the policy determined? What purposes was it meant to achieve? What type of social and political order does it embody? Such questions can lead to a very different

view of relevance from the one repeatedly expressed in this volume.

Yogendra Singh does prepare the groundwork for asking such questions, but he does not pursue one or more questions far enough. Instead, he takes up a number of examples where social research (including the so called 'policy research') assisted in the ongoing mystification of social reality. He is able to talk about mystification in the context of social scientific work primarily because he does not dichotomize knowledge from ideology. Despite Manheim, such a dichotomy continues to inform the curricula and teaching of social sciences in many parts of the world including India. Though one is not surprised, yet one cannot avoid feeling disappointed to find no discussion of the role of ideology in determining the relevance of social research.

The loss incurred by social scientists, particularly by economists, in their attempt to construct autonomous contexts divorced from social reality is the main theme of C.T. Kurien's paper. Making a strong critique of neo-classical economics, Kurien asserts that social sciences can only be 'applied' sciences. The social scientist must focus attention on real social problems and place these problems in an historical context. Those habituated to constructing purely mechanical models of behaviour—economic, political, social, or educational — will find Kurien's advice somewhat annoying, while others may find it challenging. Awareness of history is certainly important, but one must ask why historical contextualization cannot deteriorate into a mechanical process as so many other well-conceived aspects of research methodology (one being the review of available studies) already have. Perhaps it is not enough to say that problems taken up for research should be placed in an historical context. One should also insist on the need to make sense of history, to distinguish between the significant and the not-so-significant facts.

It is perhaps this 'sense' of history with which Sukhamoy Chakravarty accredits the social scientists of the pre-Independence period. The work done at that time, he says, 'was relevant at least in the sense that it gave expression to certain major societal concerns.' One is tempted to ask why the post-Independence social researcher fails to be guided by a societal concern. Is it because the constituency of the social scientist today is independent of the larger society? The modern researcher does not see his audience in the larger society. Afraid of being seen as a non-specialist or, worse still, a populist, he writes in a language and style which the uninitiated cannot decode. And once one stops writing in a style which others who do not share the same background cannot decipher, one soon stops finding things that would be worth the attention of these bedazzled others. This is where the social researcher's world becomes truly autonomous, and at this point the salient questions of one's time become irrelevant.

Krishna Kumar

Communication

RUSTAMJI'S comments on the Punjab situation are totally one-sided. He has not judged the magnitude of the problem and his remedies will only accentuate the rapidly increasing sense of alienation among the Sikhs in India. Actually, there is a total lack of understanding regarding the explosive situation fast developing in this 'leading province' of India as Rustamji calls it. The problem is of paramount importance but even your journal which organises discussions on almost all the vital issues has sadly neglected this problem.

As Rustamji himself admits, the Sikhs are a hardworking people and have done well in various fields, especially in alleviating our food problem. Sikhs are also well off economically and follow a religion which is progressive in many respects. But a feeling has grown among them that they are being discriminated against. This feeling is not confined to a section of the community as Rustamji would like us to believe. Practically every Sikh, whether he is a farmer, soldier, technician, scientist, industrialist, businessman or anyone else shares this feeling. Even Akali leaders have been unable to contemplate the depth of this feeling and therefore attendance at the gathering of ex-servicemen far exceeded even their most optimistic estimates. For every Sikh today, Sant Bhindranwale and the duo on motorcycle are real heroes and Museebat Singh (who hijacked the Indian plane in Pakistani and was killed in an encounter with the police) is a martyr who sacrificed his life for the sake of 'Khalsa Panth'. We should not forget that the Pandey brothers who hijacked the Indian plane to Pakistan during the Janata regime were rewarded with seats in the State legislature after Mrs Gandhi's return to

power in 1980. There cannot be two sets of rules, one for us and one for the other party. When Baba Gurcharan Singh (Nirankari guru) was murdered, I found a number of Sikh students celebrating the occasion in the hostels of the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. My first response was that this view was confined to a small extremist section of the community. But, with more and more interaction and consequently a better understanding of the situation, I found that almost every Sikh, including the women and children, feels the same way about it though he may not say so publicly, especially in the presence of Hindus. None even among the so-called moderate Akali leaders has dared to criticize any of these actions.

When a whole community feels alienated in a society, there must be something seriously wrong with the system. Naturally, this feeling has not grown overnight as many believe. Rather, it is the result of more than thirtyfive years of practical experience in the society. The process was only hastened in recent years because of a number of actions of the ruling party leaders. The Dal Khalsa was created and Sant Bhindranwale projected as a leader by the Congressmen to rival the Akali Dal when the latter was in power. The situation backfired with the return of Mrs Gandhi to power both at the Centre and in Punjab after the 1980 elections, with all the disastrous consequences for the State as well as the country. But then Mrs Gandhi's style of politics is a 'no-holds barred' campaign with national interest taking a backseat.

So, we as members of the majority community have to ask ourselves, why this sense of alienation

in our brothers? What went wrong? Were some of our actions responsible for this thing? Did we take too much for granted? Only a dispassionate analysis of the past can provide the answers and it is high time, if not rather late, to do so.

In many aspects, the situation is similar to that in many other States as more and more people are feeling 'discriminated against' due to over-centralisation, repression, stifling of local initiative, imposition of a particular language and a host of other reasons. I shall not go into this general phenomenon but try to raise some of the points which are specific to the Punjab situation. The most important reason for the Sikhs feeling insecure is their fear that they may not be able to maintain their separate identity. They cite the examples of Buddhism, Jainism and other religious sects which flourished in this land at various times but were not able to withstand the pressures of Hinduism and are now extinct in this country. When a Hindu says that Sikhism is an off-shoot of Hinduism, the Sikhs feel threatened. So, it should be left to the Sikhs to decide whether they are part of Hindu society or not.

Secondly, the Hindus should become sensitive to the religious sentiments of other communities. The only reason for banning cow-slaughter in this country is that orthodox Hindus are unduly sensitive on this issue. But when it comes to banning the sale of cigarettes in the vicinity of the Golden Temple, we begin to cite arguments against it. If the sale of meat and liquor can be banned in the cities of Kurukshetra, Haridwar and other Hindu religious places, I think we should have no objection in banning the sale of tobacco in the walled city of Amritsar. But even thirty five years after Independence, the Sikhs have to agitate for this.

We must shed this 'holier-than-thou' attitude. While we talk of nationalistic Sikhs and communal Sikhs as also of nationalistic and communal Muslims, rarely do we ever hear of nationalistic Hindus and communal Hindus thereby implying that all Hindus are nationalistic in outlook. If communal, we call them misguided nationalists while others are anti-national if they ever raise their voice against the government. This only gives credence to the Akali charge that the Sikhs are being treated as second class citizens in India. And, if any further evidence were needed, Bhajan Lal provided this in ample measure by humiliating innocent, well meaning individuals whose only fault was that they belonged to a particular community.

Another thorny issue concerns the territorial and river-water disputes. These problems have been pending since the reorganisation of the Punjab State.

Why cannot we arrive at an agreement and then implement it expeditiously? Congress ministries have been at the helm of affairs in all the States for a majority of this period but all of them speak

in different voices. It is only now that the agitation has picked up. So why blame only the Akalis for being unreasonable. Mrs Gandhi believes that she can allow the agitation to run its course. But we are sitting on a volcano. More and more Sikhs are coming to the conclusion that they will always be treated shabbily in India and hence there is a hardening of attitude. On the other hand, we have persons like Rustamji who want that even negotiations should be stopped. It appears that with his BSF background he wants to treat the Punjab situation as just another law-and-order problem while actually it is a social and political problem. Taking care of the law and order situation will not root out the causes of this malady.

I would also like to point out that Punjabis have always been treated shabbily in Haryana. Everyone will admit that a sizable population in the State is Punjabi speaking. But they have to study Telugu or Malayalam as their second language because the government wants to prove to its people that by being anti-Punjabi and anti-Sikh they are protecting the interests of Haryana State.

As for Darbara Singh, he has been a very incompetent and inefficient CM. No doubt he is secular. But what has he done to defuse the explosive situation in the State. Brave statements do not constitute a policy. So far he has not been taken into confidence by his party high command regarding the demands of a party of the State he is ruling. While so many murders have been committed, the murderers are still at large. Sant Bhindranwale was also badly mishandled by him.

Coming to those Hindus who are moving out of Punjab, I will only say that they are cowards and are running away from a problem. Punjab belongs to all Punjabis and not to Sikhs alone, so why should anybody think of leaving? There are a large number of Sikhs living in other parts of the country and Rustamji himself admits that they will be in danger once the situation gets out of hand. But all of them are sticking to their States and not even one Sikh has migrated to the Punjab.

I would also like to request my Sikh brothers that the Anandpur Sahib resolution cannot be accepted in so far as granting of special status to Sikhism is concerned because we are a secular society. As regards more powers to the States, the Akalis should join hands with other political parties and fight for this on a political plane rather than resorting to violence and extremism. Moderate Sikh leaders and intellectuals would do well to come out openly and condemn the acts of terrorism which cannot be tolerated in any civilized society.

Ramesh Arora,
Assistant Entomologist,
PAU Operational Research Project,
Bhatinda, Punjab.

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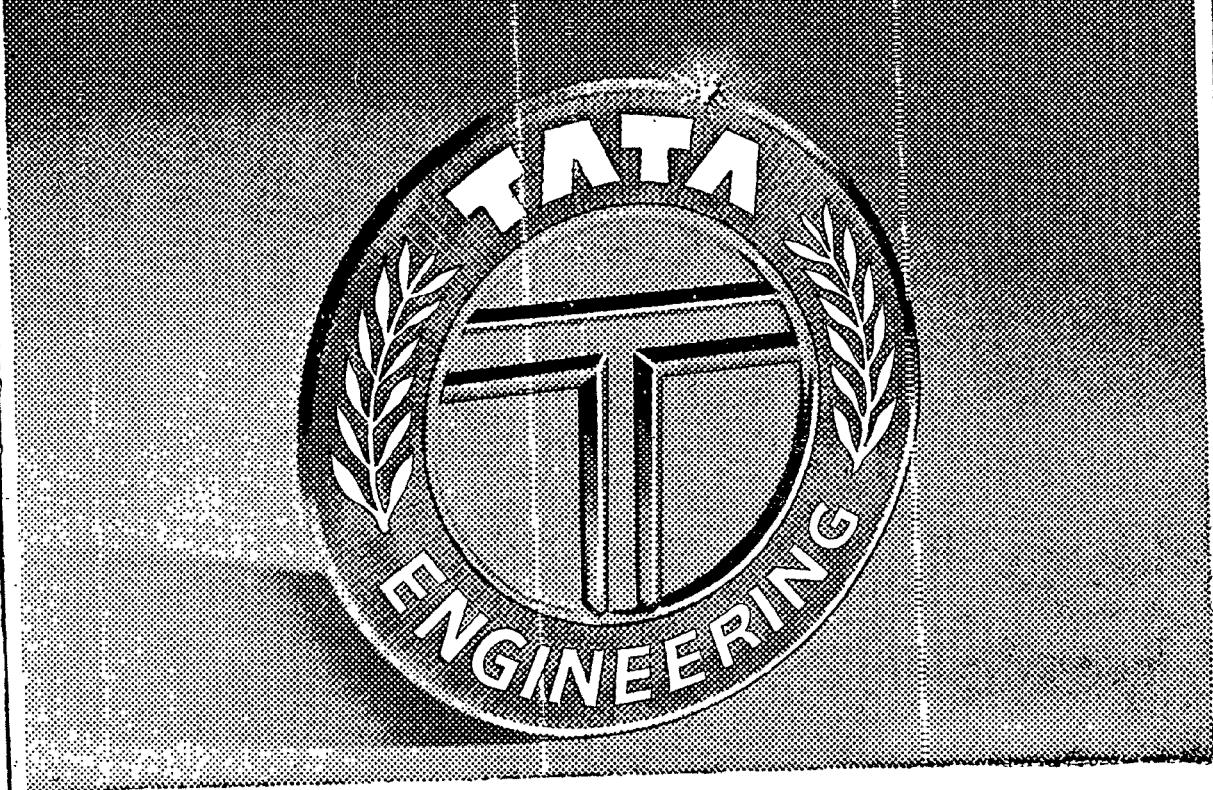
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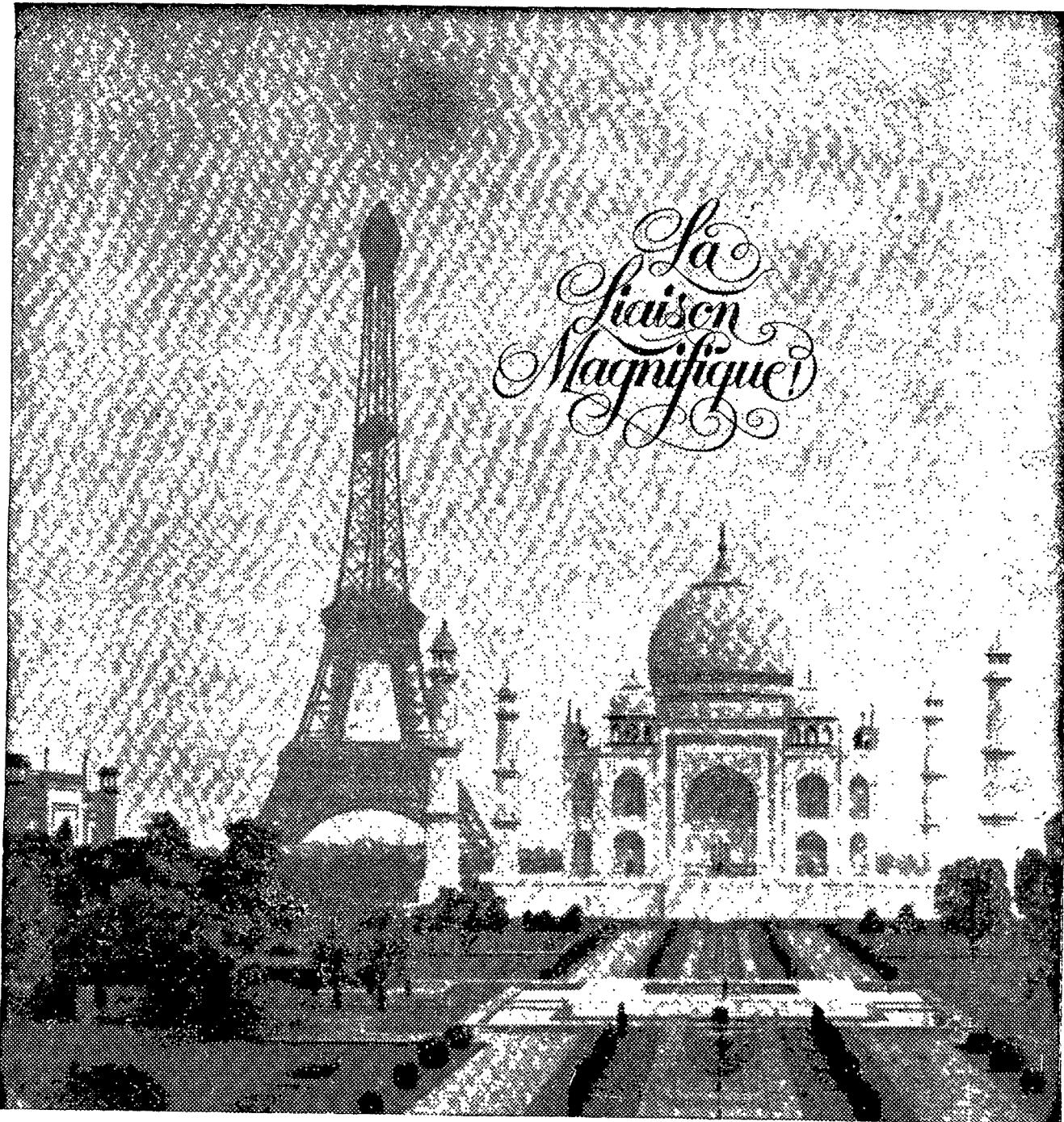
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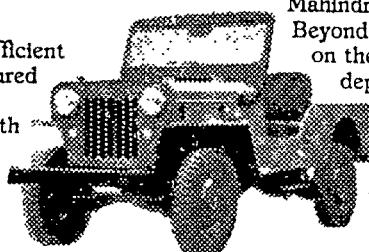
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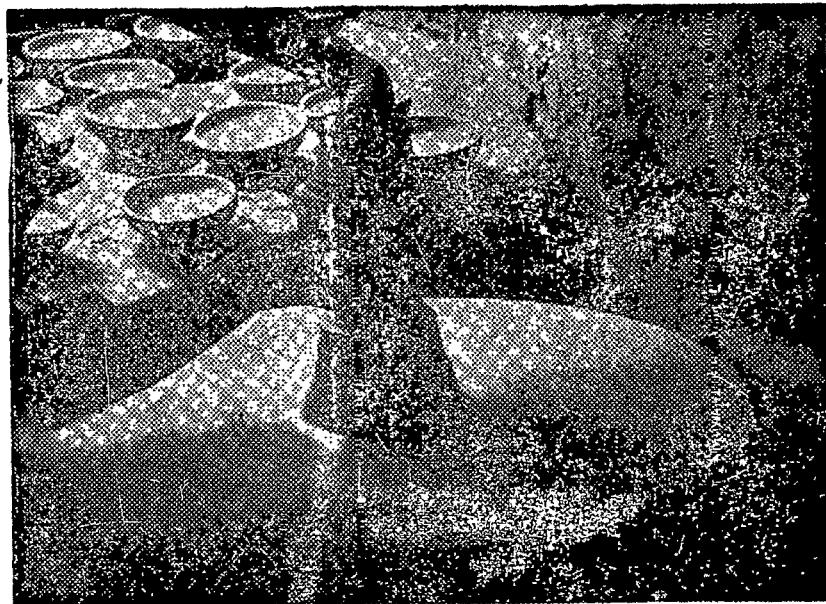
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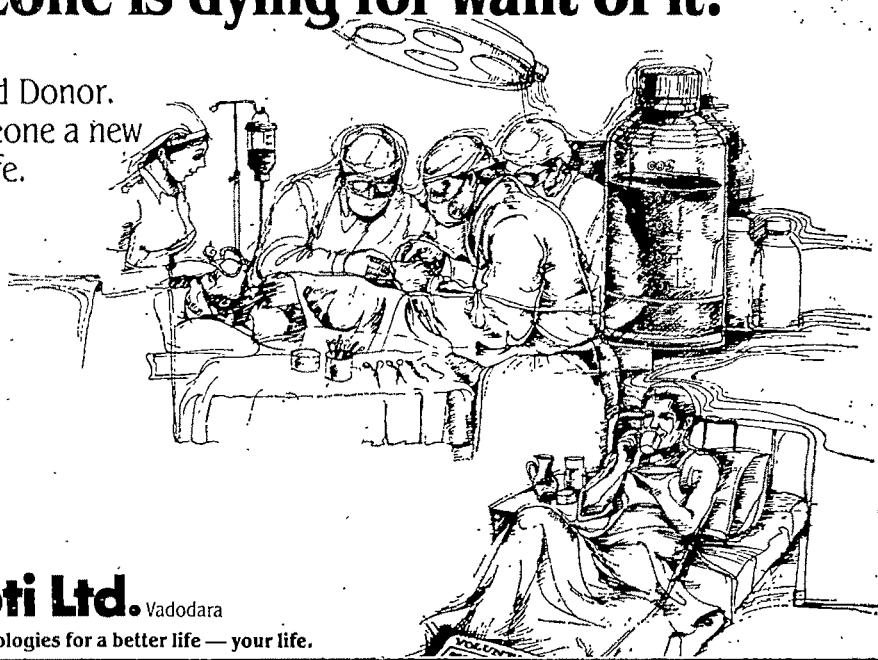
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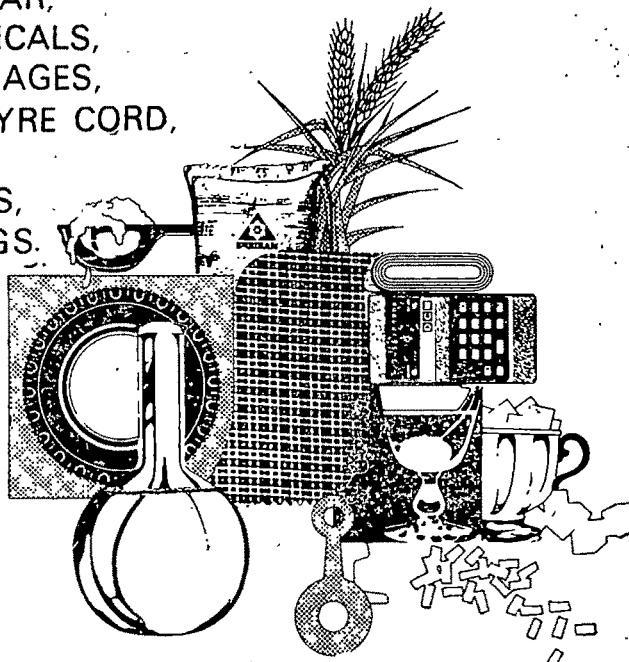


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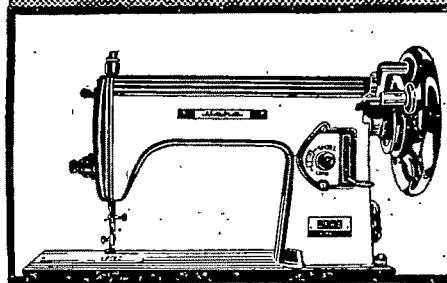
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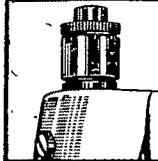
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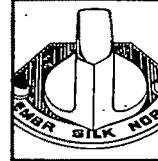
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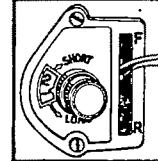
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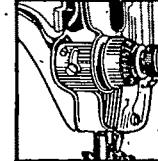
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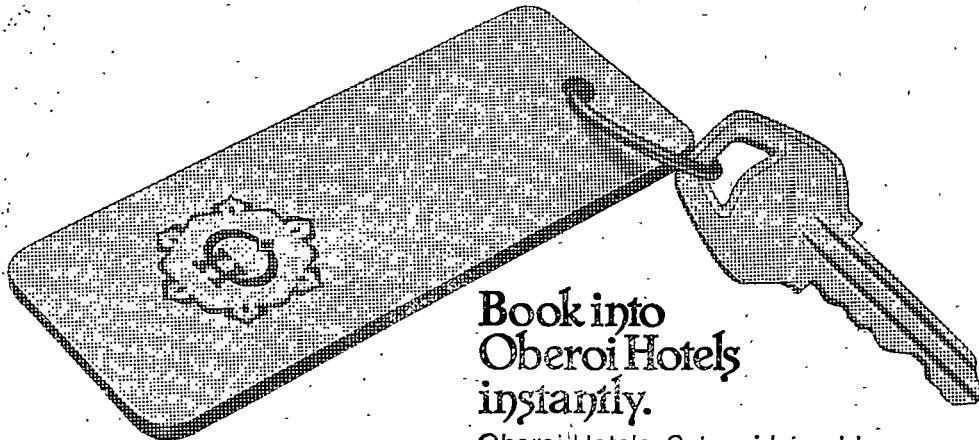
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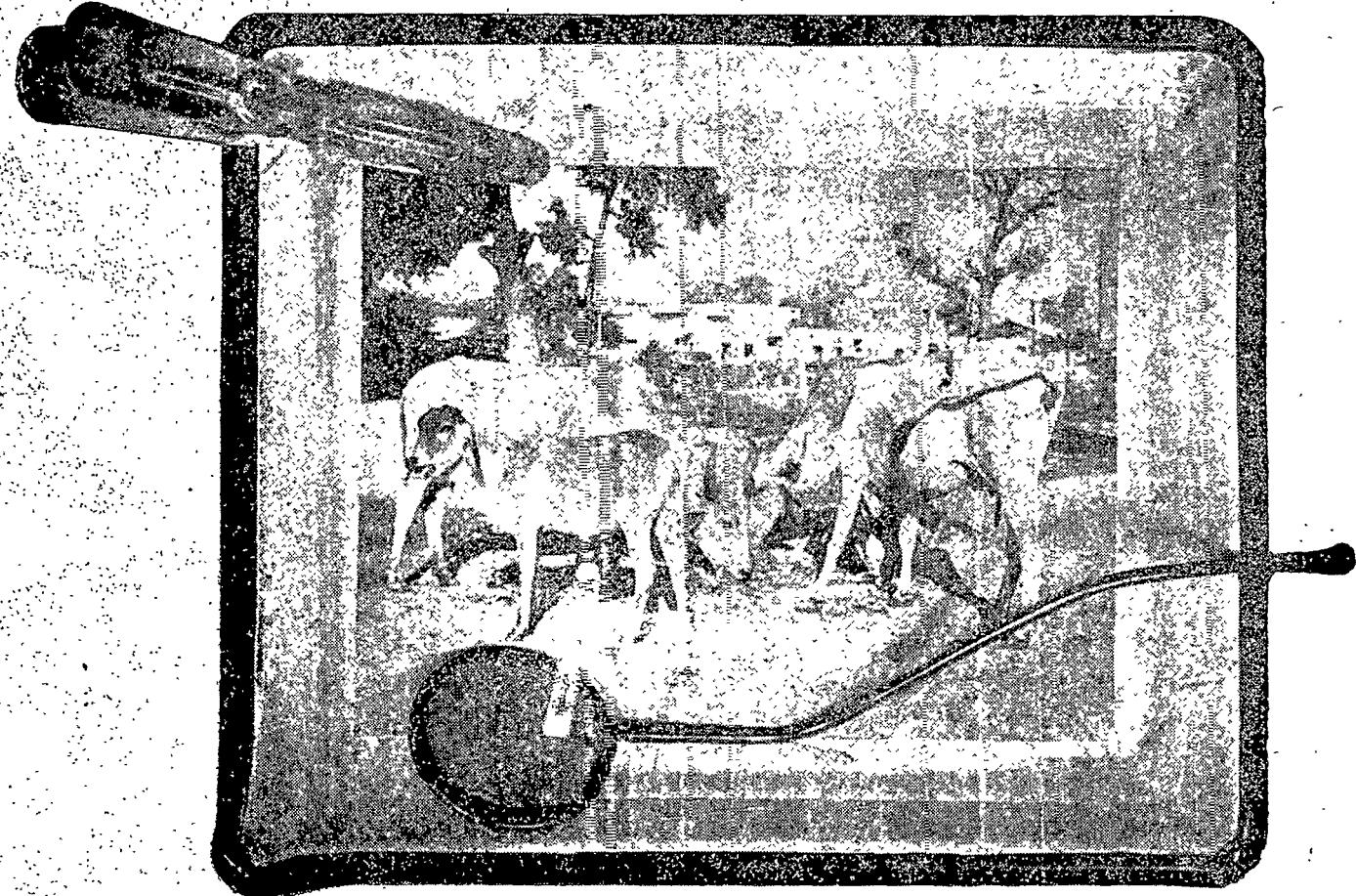


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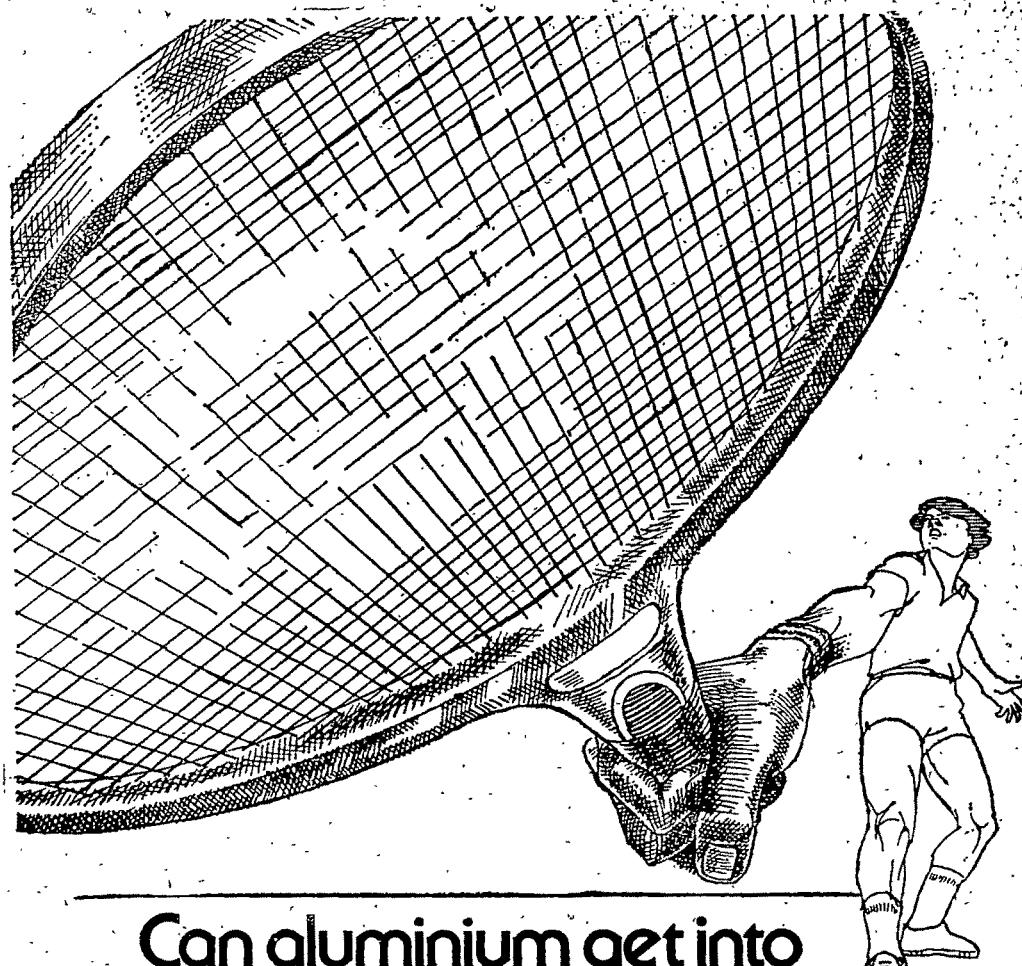
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COVER

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The problem

ONE ordinarily thinks of *black money* as a stock of money wealth illegally acquired by dishonest traders and stacked away in secret vaults. Thus, it is thought that the essential problem of dealing with this unsavoury phenomenon is one of greater vigilance in unearthing this hidden wealth, recovering the evaded taxes and punishing the offenders. If the problem were just that, it should not cause much anxiety. After all, one lives with a fair amount of lawlessness in the society and one can hope that, with a better skilled and better equipped police force, this problem would be brought under control over time.

Unfortunately, the phenomenon of *black money* is much more complex than that. Apart from the question of morality and law enforcement, the phenomenon generates some extremely damaging consequences for the economy. The loss in government revenue is only a small part of the over-all effects of the *black money* phenomenon. The real damage to the economy comes from its effect on the economy's ability to generate growth, employment and social justice. Moreover, if the system decides to live with it for any length of time, it grows in scale and in

complexity and gradually corrodes the system's ability to deal with it.

Black money should not be thought of as merely a stock of illegal wealth. It is a category of economic transactions which not only needs to be kept hidden from the eyes of the law, but also all other consequential transactions have to be kept successfully hidden. For example, if some income arising out of a transaction is not declared to the tax authorities, then the disposal of this income through other transactions also has to be kept hidden. This can be done only if a well-organised parallel economy exists beside the open economy. Thus, one act of tax evasion or bribe-taking generates pressure for creating a system in which it is possible to carry out a series of other illegal transactions. Moreover, these transactions can take place only if the personnel of the supervisory or enforcement agencies are either inefficient or corrupt. As the volume of illegal transactions multiply over time, the incentives for corrupting the law enforcement agencies become stronger and stronger. In other words, an act of tax evasion cannot be successful without creating conditions for

making many more evasions possible in the future.

There is another kind of problem connected with the disposal of undisclosed income. It is easier to invest illegal incomes in certain kinds of assets rather than in others. It is relatively easy to acquire urban real estate, jewellery, antiques, precious stones, carpets etc., with *black money* by under-reporting the value of such assets. It is not easy to underestimate the value of shares and bonds because their prices are regularly quoted on the stock exchange. This makes the transactions of the first kind more remunerative than those of the second kind, because in one case the tax liabilities on the gains can be easily evaded whereas in the other case that cannot be done easily.

In such a situation, savers find it more profitable to invest their money in unproductive assets and thereby bring down the rate of real capital formation in the economy. Thus, the existence of the parallel economy (which is the same thing as the phenomenon of black money) is usually accompa-

ied by conditions in which the productive economy is sluggish and stagnant, but the markets for real estate etc., are very active.

What sustains the growth of the parallel economy? In the ultimate analysis, it is a question of the acceptability of tax evasion and bribery to the various sections of the population. Middle class people under-report the value of the house property they own and sell. They justify this practice on the grounds that the rich can evade taxes on a variety of activities and do so with impunity; so why shouldn't they on their small house property? The rich businessmen say that they are required to make undisclosed donations to the political bosses; therefore, the political system has to create the possibilities of earning secret incomes. Bribe-taking officials say that in a system in which everybody openly talks and writes about buying legislators, how can one reasonably expect their services to remain outside the realm of commercial transactions? Thus, we have a political economy in which a variety of factors reinforce each other to create the demand for and the supply of black money.

A primer

J. C. SANDESARA

THE dictionary meaning of parallel is 'lying or moving in the same direction, but always the same distance apart.' A familiar use of this adjective is to be found in the phrase, parallel lines, defined in geometry as the lines which never meet. Perhaps, against this background, the phrase, parallel economy, as used in India suggests (a) that there is this other, unofficial economy operating in the country along with the official economy and (b), that these two economies do not meet. While the first suggestion is valid, the second is not.

In popular parlance, the unofficial economy goes by the name of black money and the official, of white money. Black and white are also variously substituted by number two and number one, unaccounted and accounted, unreported and reported, unrecorded and recorded, and so on. In what follows, we stick to the popular parlance of black money and white money, and use them as if their substitute words used by others carry the same meanings as the ones given here.¹

Depending upon the context in which the word, money, is used in the discussion, it has the connotation of the value of turnover or transaction, the value of income or the value of wealth or asset. Thus, for example, if a person sells goods

1. It is pertinent to add here that these words may not always have the same meaning when used as substitutes. Thus, for example, if for his annual income of Rs 50,000 from sale of cloth, a person files an income tax return of Rs 50,000 showing Rs 25,000 from sale of cloth and Rs 25,000 as agricultural income (hence not taxable), the latter is black but since he records it, it is recorded. Or, if he files a return for the balance of Rs 25,000 in the name of his relative, it is black income for him, but 'official' for his relative. This point is pursued later.

worth Rs 10 lakhs per annum, that sum is the value of his transaction or turnover. If out of that amount the value of goods and services required to effect that turnover is Rs 9 lakhs; the balance of Rs 1 lakh is his annual (profit) income. If out of that income, he spends Rs 50,000 on his consumption expenditure, and invests the balance of Rs 50,000 in a bank deposit or a machine, that balance is his wealth/asset.

Now, if all of these values, namely Rs 10 lakhs, Rs 1 lakh and Rs 50,000 are reported to the relevant authorities according to the legal requirements and accounted for officially, they are called white money — specifically and respectively, white turnover, white income and white wealth.

Unlike the white money, the black money carries a special stigma, a special mark of disgrace as seen from at least legal and, to the extent the law reflects the moral or ethical standards of society, also from the moral or ethical standpoint. The disgrace stems from the fact that this money is acquired by violating one or the other law of the land.

Basically, there are two types of violation. In one, the law is violated by unreporting or under-reporting of the quantities related to or emanating from the activities which are basically legal. Here, the stigma is attached to the quantities unreported or under-reported, not to the activities themselves. In the other, the law is violated because of indulgence in the activities which are basically illegal and therefore unreportable as such, irrespective of the quantities involved, including the quantities exempted under various taxation laws, such as the sales tax, income tax, wealth tax. Here,

the stigma is attached to the activities themselves.

Let us illustrate the difference: (a) There is a tax on the sale of cloth, and the exemption limit is Rs 5 lakhs per annum. A is a clothier and his turnover is Rs 10 lakhs. However, he files a return of Rs 7 lakhs with the sales tax officer. The balance of Rs 3 lakhs is his black money, i.e., black turnover. (b) The income tax exemption limit is Rs 15,000 per annum. B's yearly income is Rs 40,000. However, he files a return of Rs 30,000 with the income-tax department. The balance of Rs 10,000 is his black money, i.e., black income. (c) The wealth tax exemption limit is Rs 1.5 lakhs. C's wealth is Rs 5 lakhs. However, he files a return of Rs 3.5 lakhs. The balance of Rs 1.5 lakhs is his black money, i.e., black wealth.

Smuggling, illicit distillation and gambling, and slave trade are the classic examples of illegal activities. In view of the illegal nature of such activities, monies connected with these activities are all black. And, therefore, the turnovers of these activities and incomes earned from and wealth created out of such incomes are all black turnover, black income and black wealth respectively.

Thus, for example, if D has sold smuggled gold of Rs 50 lakhs in a year, that sum is his black money in the turnover sense. If out of that amount, the value of gold and of the services required to effect that transaction is Rs 40 lakhs, the balance of Rs 10 lakhs is his black income (profits) of the year. If out of that income, he spends Rs 4 lakhs on his consumption expenditure, and invests the balance of Rs 6 lakhs in land, building or machine, that balance is his black wealth/asset.

Since official statistics are based on the relevant statistical and other information of the quantities reported or recorded of the legal activities, they relate, it is believed, to the white economy only, and therefore exclude the black economy. It is also believed that these two economies do not meet. Both of these beliefs are ill-founded and wrong.

In fact, as illustrated in what follows, the former includes the latter, and the latter the former. Further, the two economies not merely meet each other but, also, the quantities involved therein interchange from black to white and vice versa; and they support and sustain each other in a variety of ingenious ways. And these ways vary all the way from wholly illegal to wholly or at least largely legal. The phrase 'parallel' economy used for the black economy which suggests that it is parallel to the white economy is, thus, a misnomer.

E receives his provident fund, say Rs 2 lakhs, by an account payee cheque. He wants to invest it in a flat. The flat is available for Rs 2 lakhs — Rs 1 lakh without receipt to be paid in cash and the balance with receipt to be paid by cheque. E gets the cheque credited to his bank, withdraws Rs 1 lakh by cash, writes a cheque of Rs 1 lakh in favour of the flat seller, and makes the full payment to that party as required. Thus, the proceeds from the white asset of the provident fund have been used partly as black money, both in the turnover sense and in the wealth sense. Similarly, a 'gift' to a relative under the law, given out of black money (income or wealth) by F is declared as given out of the white money (income or wealth), thus converting black into white.

Such interminglings may be illustrated further with reference to illegal quantities and illegal activities.

The principal motive for unreporting or under-reporting of the quantities of turnover, income and assets related to legal activities is to minimise tax payments. So, some quantities may just not be reported at all. And some could well be reported elsewhere where tax liability is less or absent, rather than at the right place where such reporting might invite more tax.

This elsewhere is comprised of *benami* and fictitious parties. Thus, for example, the black turnover of Rs 3 lakhs of A, the black income of Rs 10,000 of B and the black wealth of Rs 1.5 lakhs of C may

not be reported at all, or reported *benami* or in the names of fictitious parties at levels which are exempt or attract lower rates of taxation. In the latter event, the black turnover, income and wealth are reckoned as white and will be reflected in official statistics.

The quantities originating in the activities which are basically illegal cannot be reported as such. In a sense, they are, therefore, unreportable as such. They may, however, be reported as originating from other, legal activities. Thus, to revert to the previous example of D, the sale of smuggled gold of Rs 50 lakhs may be reported as a turnover of cloth, the income of Rs 10 lakhs earned from smuggling of gold as income from the sale of cloth, and the wealth of Rs 6 lakhs created out of the income generated through the smuggling of gold may be reported as having been created out of income earned from the sale of cloth. To that extent, such turnover, incomes and assets get reported in the official statistics, under one or the other legal activity.

Of the three meanings of black money, namely, black turnover, black income and black wealth, estimates on the first and the third are not available. However, some estimates on the second meaning are available. Here, a number of figures are offered to suggest the magnitude of black income in India. Some of them are based on highly mechanistic applications of one or the other statistical technique, and some show little evidence of a sound foundation, exertion or ingenuity. They need not be taken seriously. In the past, we had occasion to review other, more serious and substantive estimates.² Those exercises need not be repeated here. However, we present here a summary view of these exercises. Accordingly, black income was put as forming between 10 to 15 per cent of the white income around 1980, and that for a considerable period preceding that date, the former might have been grow-

2. J.C. Sandesara: 'Black Income', *The Economic Times*, Bombay, December 18 and 19, 1981; also 'Estimates of Unreported Economy of India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, March 20, and June 12, 1982.

ing at a faster rate than the latter.

Black money is not peculiarly an Indian phenomenon. It is, as often said, a 'global phenomenon'; only labelled differently. It would, however, seem that in some of the advanced countries for which we could find statistics for one or more recent years, black income relative to white income is about the same as or less than in India.³

Apart from the size difference in the black economies of India and other countries, there is this other difference; black money operations appear to be far more widespread in India. The number of deals and the number of parties involved in them, relative to the respective sizes of the economies, both seem to be larger, although the average amount involved per deal may be smaller in India than in others. There are innumerable stories from Indians and foreigners who have dealings in India and abroad of how common the fiddling of accounts and corruption, sometimes for unbelievably small amounts, is in India as compared to many an advanced country.

The consequences may be considered under three categories. We first deal with the category having a general bearing. The second has a bearing on the efficacy of the policy instruments and the programmes under the development plans. The third category outlines the limitations of the general picture today and the one emerging for the future as seen through official statistics. Under each category, we detail two points.

(1) The great disparity of income and wealth between a few on the one hand and a vast majority on the other is by itself considered bad for a modern civilised, welfare State. It

3. The figures are: (1) U.K., one estimate 7.5, another estimate 3.5, (2) Italy, 10, (3) Denmark 6, (4) U.S.A., one estimate, low 26, high 33; another estimate 10, (5) Israel, 33. The figures are of black incomes as percentages of gross national product. The estimates presented here are for the latest year as given in the source. Source: J.C. Sandesara, 'Black Income, Part I—Estimates in India and Abroad', *The Economic Times*, Bombay, December 18, 1981, p. 9, Table II.

is worse when these few are found over-indulging in the 'pleasures of the flesh' on a perennial basis, in accumulating almost endlessly for their progeny, and in wielding their money power in the social, political, governmental and religious spheres to their own advantage, especially when a majority live in abysmal poverty and without even a ray of hope for a notable change for the better for themselves or their progeny.

The ill-feelings arising out of such inequalities are turned into hatred when the doings of the rich owe their existence to black money, especially when these doings have the consequences of denial to the poor of even the minimum to keep them intact, even at the below subsistence level of existence. Indeed, widespread hatred coupled with a modicum of activism on a sustained basis may be sufficient to pave the way for an eventual falling apart of the system.

(2) Since black money is basically illegal, all those concerned with it live under fear of detection or of blackmail. There is therefore a race for erasing the evidence of black money and/or of the black money itself. Considerable ingenuity and energy of citizens is, therefore, exercised and expended in these activities. And, since, in general, this cannot be done without the connivance or the active help of people in power and influence, corruption is accentuated. The law-abiding, the honest, the upright are increasingly driven, on Gresham's law, out of circulation in this system which becomes increasingly unfavourable and materially inequitable for such people.

(3) By limiting the area of white economy, black economy lessens the efficacy of monetary, fiscal and physical measures which are deployed by the State to promote the public good as specified in the development plans.

(4) Black money is best concealed in consumption and charities. Ostentatious living, travel in regal style, entertaining on a five-star culture, high-fee schooling, charities and donations for social, cultural, religious and political causes, are

the well-known favourites of the black money holders. The other use of black money is investment in gold, jewellery and the like which are capable of holding large values in small bulks and, therefore, especially attractive for concealment. Black money is also used for hoarding commodities and real estate for speculative purposes. And last but not the least, it is concealed in the form of other assets such as inventory, land, building, machinery, etc., the real values of which are understated in the books even when used productively.

When so consumed, black money propels demand for such goods and services, making their sales and production more profitable. Increased profitability induces increased supplies of such goods and services, which may be met through imports, legal or otherwise, or increased production at home. When spent otherwise as illustrated above, they fuel unproductive investment, speculative activities and phantom values for real productive assets. Thus, whereas the paper plans preach the virtues of austere living and high priority, more productive investments, the economy glides along ostentatious living and low priority, less productive investments.

Thus, the scarce resources of capital, foreign exchange, skills and enterprise get diverted to the activities propelled by black money. And since in economics, one cannot have something for nothing, the casualties are in the areas enjoying priorities in programmes of planned development such as the minimum needs programmes which bring relief to the poor and investments in oil, steel, fertilizers, etc., which generate more surpluses in the short run.

(5) The official statistics are suspect. As shown earlier, white money is not all that white, and black money not all that black. The real or actual aggregate quantities involved in the white and black economies would be different from the ones suggested by known statistics. Our guess here is that while the aggregate size of the economy would be bigger than the size suggested by the white economy, it would be smaller than the size suggested by a

sum of the sizes of these two economies.

Whatever the size, the real or actual distribution of white and black economies by the size of operating units, by the income, expenditure or wealth of individuals/families, and by the legal and the illegal activities would also be different from the respective distributions known on the basis of available statistics. Our conjectures here are that in the real or actual situations, the number of small sized units may be relatively fewer and the number of less well-off individuals relatively larger than the respective numbers suggested by the statistics. So also would be the turnovers, and incomes, expenditure and wealth accounted for by these numbers.

Thus, the presence of money makes for greater inequalities of income and wealth in the society than the ones suggested by the statistics known otherwise. The relative importance of legal activities is also overstated by these statistics. The 'ghost' shops and workshops, the 'ghost' individuals and families and the 'ghost' activities create a semblance of a society that is better than what it actually is.

(6) Under the best of statistics and assumptions, an exercise in futurology, with or without planning, is a leap in the dark. To the extent that it is based on the official and available statistics, as it generally is, it leaves out not too small a growing proportion of economic activities of the country. And as pointed out above, these activities distort the course of action in practice from the one chalked out in these exercises. Such exercises may therefore tend to be less meaningful with the passage of time.

Finally, the prescription — operationally the most important part. What follows is more in the nature of a pointer to the directions, not the details.

A prescription is generally two-fold: curative and preventive, and we have had both. The former is supposed to be more relevant in the short run, and the latter in the long run.

The curative measures adopted in the past include demonetisation (1946 and 1978), voluntary disclosure schemes (1951, 1965 and 1975), special bearer bonds (1980-81 — 1981-82) and raids, i.e., searches and seizures. All concerned concede that these efforts in unearthing black money yielded only molecular results. Indeed, a heartening episode here is that on the basis of these results, government has mercifully not suggested that the small quantities unearthed during these efforts are reflections of the small sizes of black money in India!

Curative measures are at their best when adopted in a once-for-all spirit. They cannot be employed frequently, and if so done they cause, on balance, harm in the long run, cancelling whatever good they might do in the short run. Thus, for example, demonetisations undermine the confidence of the public in the currency and lead to preference for transactions in kind to those in money, and in investments in non-financial (e.g., real estate, precious metals and stones) to financial (e.g., deposits) assets. Deployment of the schemes such as the voluntary disclosures and the special bearer bonds promote laxity in tax compliance in the present to benefit from later-day tax leniencies. And the tax-payers take the raids in their stride and learn to live with them in good humour. Indeed, as the market-men say with a mixture of seriousness and joviality, if at all there were any doubt about the plenitude of income and wealth of a party, the raid there dispels that doubt; and if at all there were any doubt about their scantiness, the absence of raid supports that doubt!

Inflation, taxation, controls and immorality are each regarded as a basic, causal factor. The measures against these may therefore be called preventive measures. Each is positively associated with black money, so that high inflation, heavy taxation, more controls and widespread immorality make for a large size, whereas low inflation, light taxation, less controls and restricted immorality make for a small size of black money. What is the record here?

This record may be conveniently seen with reference to three periods. The demarcation is very rough, and not uniform for each factor, since Independence to the early sixties, from the mid-sixties to the early seventies, and since then. The summary of the record as given below is general, tentative and impressionistic. But it is hoped that it is not too unsatisfactory not to permit the points made on that basis.

Inflation was low in the first period, high in the second, and again low during the third. Taxation was low during the first period, and high during the later periods. Recently, the feeling in government seems to be that high taxation is counterproductive. So, the rate acceleration is less common; in fact, in some cases, rates have been revised downward. Thus, for example, the maximum rate of personal tax has been brought down from 92 to 66 per cent. Controls were less during the first period, more during the second and again less during the third.

As to immorality, it may have increased more or less throughout — thanks to higher inflation, increased taxation, worsening of the real income of the tax-collectors, less fear of being caught, thanks due, among other things, to the increased and greater involvement of the higher-ups in shoddy deals, diminished prestige of the State as an impartial umpire and as a protector and promoter of the interests of the weak, the handicapped and the underprivileged.

On the other hand, a widely held view on changes in the size of black money through time is that it has increased throughout relative to the white economy, from a small size during the first period to a substantial size at the moment. If this view is valid, we have to accept that, given other things, but for the mitigating impact of inflation, controls and, to a limited extent, of taxation during the third period, black money would have been even larger in size.

Inflation reduces the real value of (money) income and wealth. One way of protecting oneself against

such a reduction is by under-reporting the quantities involved in turnover, income and wealth at levels which attract lower rates than otherwise; so that more post-tax money helps to retain the real value. Let us illustrate the point. An individual has an annual income of Rs 50,000. The average rate of income-tax at that level is 40 per cent. Thus, he pays a tax of Rs 20,000 and his post-tax income is Rs 30,000.

At an inflation of 10 per cent, the real value of that monetary quantity is worth Rs 27,000 only. To compensate for this reduction in real value, he under-reports his income at Rs 47,600. Let us suppose the average rate of income-tax at that level is 35 per cent. Thus, he pays a tax of Rs 16,600, and his post-tax income on that basis is Rs 30,940.

However, since he has under-reported his income of Rs 2,400 (50,000-47,600), we have to add that amount to Rs 30,940. This gives us a figure of Rs 33,340. At the inflation rate of 10 per cent, the real value of that monetary quantity is worth Rs 30,006, say Rs 30,000. Thus, the inflation of 10 per cent has been checkmated by the black income of Rs 2,400. This illustration highlights the significance of controlling inflation in curbing black money.

However, a stable price-level is ruled out. For long, it has been and will continue to be, a world of rising prices. The question, therefore, is not one of stable versus rising prices, but one of degrees of increase. In fact, there is a view that a small dose of inflation is not only not bad but desirable and, therefore, to be aimed at to subserve economic growth and development. We are in sympathy with this view. At the same time, we are also convinced that high inflation would be positively injurious to that cause. That being the case, where do we draw the line?

Considering all things together, we may take a view that inflation of up to 5 per cent per annum may not be considered a worrisome development and that over that rate but

under 10 per cent may not be considered excessively worrisome. But a double-digit rate must be viewed with alarm, and must be avoided generally. Compelling circumstances such as a war may however warrant exceptions permitting higher rates. A follow-up of this prescription does not root out the causal factor of inflation, but it would help keep the black money size small.

Of the various views on taxation, we may refer to two. One is that high taxation is conducive to tax evasion, and the other that low taxation does not diminish tax evasion. The proponents of the former view, therefore, advocate low taxation to reduce black money. The other view pins hopes elsewhere.

Taxation is a more difficult area than inflation. The State looks upon taxation from a variety of angles. Firstly, government requires revenue to finance the expenditure connected with the performance of its first order obligations, such as maintenance of law and order, administration of justice, preparedness against external invasion, etc. Secondly, it requires revenue to meet the expenditure for the second order priorities of the physical and social infrastructure. Thirdly, the State in poor countries is also an active agent promoting development, by aiding and encouraging private parties or on its own as an entrepreneur, in various other sectors of the economy also. Finally, the revenue collected and the expenditure effected have to be so done as to promote another objective also, namely, the reduction of absolute poverty and of inequalities of income and wealth in the country.

The revenue needs of the State are thus immense, and it would be of little use to pretend that low taxation would suffice. At the same time, we have also to consider the fact that over the period, tax revenue relative to national income has gone up substantially, and its present level cannot be considered as unsatisfactorily low. This mopping up has, in general, been done in both ways—by raising the rates as well as by expanding the base of taxation.

As pointed out earlier, of late a feeling seems to have grown in the government that we may have reached the point of diminishing returns, at any rate as regards hikes in the rates. Further hikes might be counterproductive in the sense that they would act as deterrents to further effort or that they would divert some of the existing and future efforts to the black sector. We feel that there is considerable force in this view.

What is, therefore, suggested here as a general proposition is that for some time to come, the government must continue to base its taxation policy and measures on the view that hikes on the present levels are counter-productive. The results of such policies may be reviewed after a period of five to seven years, and a fresh view taken in the light of this study.

During that period, efforts for more revenue by the State may be restricted to widening the base by bringing more commodities and parties within the tax net, to plugging the loopholes resorted to for tax avoidance (which is essentially tax evasion) and to enforcing more strictly compliance with the law. Here, the first is left at that. As to the second, it may be questioned whether it is so essential as to warrant the retention of the Hindu undivided family as a separate entity. Such handicaps as may follow by its abolition may perhaps be taken care of in some other way. Similarly, the case for treating agricultural incomes differently for taxation from other incomes is also weak. Tax compliance is closely linked with the question of morality and therefore it is dealt with in that context later.

Complete freedom from controls is not possible. Controls are viewed as avoiding the common detriment and promoting the public good. That is why even in the heyday of laissez faire capitalism of the early days, controls existed in all countries (e.g., Factory Acts). In modern times, controls have taken many forms, and they vary all the way from permits/licenses required to start a shop which are issued almost routinely to complete prohibition of cer-

tain activities such as slave trade. Examples of controls which fall in between are: town and country planning regulations, directives to banks and insurance companies, investment, foreign exchange and industrial location controls, restrictions on imports, production and distribution controls operated through prices and quantities, etc.

We have had a long period of increasing controls. On the basis of this experience, we seem to have realised that a number of controls may not have served their purposes or may have proved to be counter-productive. Recent trends in liberalisation in this sphere perhaps owe their origin to this view. As in taxation, here also government should give sufficient time for the operation of this tendency. In general, controls may be restricted to high priority areas to be defined with great care, and in a reasonable number. This is suggested principally on two considerations.

First, for long, controls have been thought of as providing a fertile ground for the inbreeding of nepotism, corruption and black money. One may have heard innumerable stories of ministers and government servants charged with the duties of framing policies on administering controls having made fortunes otherwise unexplainable on the basis of known sources of their income, and of businessmen and industrialists who have expanded their empires more on the basis of their skill and enterprise displayed in manipulating controls to their advantage than on any other basis. The 'success' stories of many such parties are a reflection of the failure of controls.

Second, it is now increasingly realised that even where controls may serve their purpose in the short run, they may not do so in the long run, so that scarcities are perpetuated. Consider, for example, the case of price-control. The purpose of such a control is to make the commodity subject to that control available to the consumer at a controlled, low price. In response to such a price, the producer may substitute an inferior raw material, and make that product of poor quality, or he

may go slow in the production of that commodity and fast in the production of other commodities where there are no controls. Also, the potential producers may shun that line.

Thus, whereas low price stimulates demand, it depresses supply so that scarcity continues. One has only to look at the markets of steel, cement, edible oils, sugar, etc., which have been subject to different types of control over the period, for support of the operation of such tendencies,

The liberalisations in vogue and that may follow may be expected to curb the rate of growth of black money. Further, gains in the latter endeavour must be sought from the rigorous and scrupulous administration of the controls that remain.

Regarding morality, we may steer clear of two things. We leave aside the general question of whether the economic laws of the State are moral laws at all. We take it that they are. Secondly, morality is also construed to refer to norms and practices as set and observed by custom, habit and convention in economic and other spheres — social, cultural, religious, etc., but which do not have the force of law. This part is not considered here.

In the limited context of this paper, immorality may be defined in terms of a divergence between what ought to be done as per the laws on taxation and control, and what is actually done by the parties — the party of policy-makers, administrators and controllers and the party of citizens or the controlled. The more the divergence between the 'ought' and the 'is', the more immoral (less moral) the society, and the less the divergence, the more moral (less immoral) the society. When such divergence is tolerated or permitted for one or the other reason on private considerations, public interest is sacrificed, the law loses its sanctity and government ceases to command respect as an impartial arbitrator and as a protector and promoter of the public interest.

State laws are basically restrictive of individual freedom in one way or

the other. They have the backing of force. It is therefore perhaps imminent in man to look upon laws as bad. Since, however, man is also a social animal, it is recognised that unfettered individual freedom is antithetical to a civilised social life and social and economic progress. Hence, the question is not one of no laws, but of how many, in which spheres, of which type and of what intensity. The answers to these questions depend upon the objectives of State policy, the degree of restrictions on individual freedom that would be accepted by the society, and the efficacy with which the laws enacted could be enforced. Thus, given other things, numerous laws and poor compliance with them make for a more immoral society, and few laws and good compliance make for a less immoral society.

In the discussion on taxation and controls, we have referred to the recent tendencies in the direction of liberalisation, and noted that these policies should be given a fair trial before they are reversed. These liberalisations may, therefore, be expected to lessen the degree of immorality in the society. In view of the many and varied objectives of the State, the revenue requirements of the government are sizeable. Also, a good deal of activity would continue to be governed by controls. One may, therefore, not expect further spectacular liberalisation in taxation and controls. In view of this, for the reduction of immorality in the society, we may have to rely in the near future all the more on better compliance with laws on taxation and controls than we may have done in the past.

A complete compliance with the laws is a norm which like all norms is perhaps unattainable. We would, therefore, have to rest content with a measure of compliance which is substantial and adequate to retain a respect for the laws. On this point, we may begin with two propositions. One is that since the spirit of the society is created from the top, the character of the citizens is merely a reflection of the character of the rulers. In this view, the responsibility for compliance rests with the government so that if the government (and this includes all from

policy makers to petty officials) enforces laws competently and honestly, citizens would have to abide by them.

The other view is that the character of the rulers is merely a reflection of the character of the citizens. In this view, the responsibility for compliance rests with the citizens so that if they are honest and conduct their relations with the government honestly, that spirit will be reflected in the government also. There is clearly some wisdom in both of these views. One cannot clap with one hand. Tax compliance requires basic honesty on both sides, and the honesty of one influences that of the other. Perhaps, the former view is more relevant in the short run and the latter in the long run.

Government is in many layers — central, State and local bodies, and from the top position of the Prime Minister to the bottom position of a petty official in service. Some layers are formed wholly by election in one way or the other and in some cases more than once (e.g., Prime Minister, Chief Minister), some wholly by selection (bureaucrats), and some partly by election and partly by selection (Ministers).

Where the election is on the basis of adult suffrage, the party and the candidate have to spend a lot of money. In general, money spent by the serious candidates in election far exceeds the limits laid down by law. Apart from the money spent by the candidates, the party also spends money generally and for individual candidates. The party and the candidates raise money from many quarters, especially from industrialists, businessmen, professionals, etc. The latter in turn give money for favours received or expected at the class level often resulting in the advocacy and adoption of policies favouring such classes rather than the public good, and/or at the individual level resulting in the grant of licenses, loans, monopoly rights, in the condonement of lapses of non-compliance of laws, etc.

The failure to give money or to give it in the expected quantum results in actions unfavourable to such parties. In this, black money

is known to play a substantial role — origin-wise and destination-wise. It is, therefore, suggested that political parties must be required by law to publish their financial statements annually and, occasionally, as after elections, detail their income and expenditure. The availability of such information could help considerably in spotting, at least generally, the nexus between money power and political power.

Secondly, a politician's world is a world of uncertainty and insecurity. He does not know whether he will be elected; if elected, whether he will get a berth in the ministry or get some other office — of profit, power and influence; and if he gets one, for how long. Having got one, he tries to get into another, higher position. Thus, he wants money to get into a position, to retain it, and to move up.

Once in office, he may be engaged, among other things, in building a personal following and expanding his spheres of influence, which may help him out when he is not in a political position. This permits in him an attitude of tolerance or encouragement of non-compliance with the law in individual cases. Such cases of personal favouritism based on nepotism and corruption must be dealt with severely by the higher-ups. No political interference by the latter should be tolerated. If the expected high standards of honesty and integrity in public office are not forthcoming on the basis of motives, there should be no hesitation in establishing them on grounds of fear.

Thirdly, the same type of fear must be inculcated among the bureaucracy as well so that it administers laws impartially and without favour. To the extent that cumbersome procedures and formalities inbreed speed money, they may be looked into closely to reduce at least the avoidable ones.

Fourthly, the honoraria of ministers and salaries of government servants at many levels seem to be low in relation to the powers vested in them and the profit opportunities that are opened by the use of these powers for private parties. There is,

therefore, a temptation to use these powers less judiciously on private considerations. It is time that the honoraria and the salaries were suitably raised, so that the force of pecuniary temptation from private parties be reduced.

Finally, three points on the other view that the responsibility for reducing immorality rests with citizens. Firstly, efforts should be made by government and private bodies to inculcate the right values in respect of tax compliance among the citizens. These efforts include publicizing widely and intensively the benefits that accrue to citizens, individually and collectively, who pay their taxes, and punishment to those who don't. In fact, such values should be inculcated right from the early stages of schooling.

Secondly, while knowledge is necessary, it is not sufficient. It must be followed by practice. It is well said that a pound of practice is more weighty than a ton of preaching. If, therefore, government sets an example by practising tax compliance in the right way, citizens would be obliged to follow suit.

Thirdly, as may have been noted from the above, the pivot in the first view is the top layer of the government. The ultimate controllers of the top are the voters. They may outvote a corrupt government and elect a clean government. Cleanliness has, however, to be assured on an enduring basis. This requires continuous vigilance and activism at various levels. It is only when a substantial number of citizens awaken from their slumbers, and are prepared to assert themselves in the cause of good and clean government for the public interest, that the top layers in the government may be compelled to behave as required.

If the citizens have no time to sacrifice for such vigilance and activism, they abdicate their responsibility as the ultimate controllers of government, in which case they better not expect or hope for morality in government. As Bertrand de Jouvenel has suggested, a society of sheep must in time beget a government of wolves.

Concepts, scale and consequences

SHANKAR ACHARYA

AN astute observer once partitioned Indian society into two groups: those who make black money and those who write about it! One would have expected the latter, and presumably poorer, group to have at least achieved some consensus on the meaning of phrases like 'black money' and 'the black economy'. Unfortunately, there seem to be almost as many meanings of these phrases as there are writers on this increasingly popular subject. At the risk of putting the reader to sleep, it might be useful to begin with a few distinctions and definitions.

First of all, it is important to dis-

*In this brief paper I deliberately eschew discussion of the underlying causes and possible remedies, not because I consider them unimportant — on the contrary—but because they are dealt with at length by other authors in this issue.

tinguish between the *flow* of *black income* over a period of time (such as a year) and the *stock* of *black wealth* at any given *point* in time. Such a distinction between income and wealth is equally important for the analysis of the regular (or 'white') economy and its constituent actors, be they households, firms or government. Unfortunately, the term 'black' money is frequently, and confusingly, used to refer to both black income and black wealth, when, in fact, its meaning, strictly speaking, should be limited to that portion of black wealth which is held in the form of currency and liquid bank deposits, in short, money.

What constitutes black income and wealth? Let us concentrate on black *income*. At the simplest and most commonsensical level, black

incomes refer to those incomes which have some element of illegality associated with them. These incomes may arise from illegal activities such as gambling, smuggling and prostitution or from unauthorized 'sale' of permits, licenses, postings and favours or from black marketing of products and services which are legally required to be sold at controlled prices and/or through specified channels. Alternatively, the activities themselves may be perfectly legal, as in the case of private medical and legal services, but to the extent the incomes earned are understated to tax authorities, the law is broken and black incomes are made.

Similarly, black incomes are generated when traders and manufacturers in perfectly legal activities suppress some portion of their output and turnover or show fictitious expenses on their accounts, in order to evade direct and indirect taxes. In some of these cases, the under-reporting of output and incomes may be motivated not so much by the desire to evade taxes on current output and incomes, as by the necessity to 'keep off the books' assets acquired from black incomes earned in the past.

In principle, the aggregation of all such black incomes earned in a year would give a measure of the black economy. In practice, such a cataloguing and summation of black incomes is impossible. Even if it were possible, it would not be correct to assume that official estimates of gross or net national income and output (GNP and NNP, respectively) exclude all such black incomes. True, there is some presumption that the under-reporting (or non-reporting) of incomes, outputs and transactions to tax and regulatory authorities will find some reflection in the data from which national income estimates are compiled. But the extent to which this occurs depends crucially on the sources and methods of national income accounting. It is possible to envisage economic activities which evade taxes, but the income from which is included in official national income estimates. Conversely, the estimates of national income may be biased downwards for reasons other

than tax evasion or suppression of incomes and output.

In any case, empirical efforts at estimating the size of the black economy should clearly distinguish between:

- (i) the aggregate of incomes which should have been reported to tax authorities but are not; and
- (ii) the extent to which such evasion and non-reporting leads to under-estimation in the official estimates of national income and output.

These are two different and widely prevalent concepts of the black economy. Both are interesting, though perhaps to different audiences.

What happens to black incomes once they have been earned or generated? As with regular income, black incomes are either consumed or saved. Much of the consumption takes the form of lavish outlays on hotels, restaurants, marriages and durable luxury goods. A good part is spent by businesses in 'greasing' the political and administrative machinery to assure favourable, and swift, allocations of various licenses, permits and other discretionary actions by politicians, administrators and their underlings. Such payments range from petty bribes to clerks and boiler inspectors to massive donations to politicians and their parties.

This sort of spending shows up as income in the hands of the recipient and is, in turn, either spent or saved. Savings from black incomes take many forms, including purchases of real estate, inventories and equipment (all of which are undervalued on the books), precious stones and metals, 'benami' fixed deposits and, of course, cash. The common feature of black wealth acquired from black incomes is that it is not reported to tax authorities.

Recent years have witnessed the growth of a veritable industry aimed at estimating the size of the black economy. (Incidentally, this popular new hobby of economists and economic journalists is not limited to India, but has also flourished in the United States, Western Europe and even Eastern Europe.) For India the

estimates of the black or unaccounted economy range from 5 per cent of officially measured GNP to 50 per cent. This enormous variation is due partly to the differences in year (s) for which the estimates are made, partly to differences in definition of the black economy and mainly to the variety of methodologies deployed to grapple with an intrinsically difficult task.

A long and erudite paper could easily be written (and no doubt will be) comparing the variety of estimates and assessing their relative strengths and weaknesses. Even without the benefit of such a treatise four points can be safely ventured.

First, estimates as high as 50 per cent of GNP are improbable, if not impossible. This is so because agriculture and certain other activities (including public administration, defence, railways, public utilities, and organized banking and insurance), where the black economy is unlikely to be significant, account for almost 60 per cent of the nation's output. Thus, any claims that the official GNP data are underestimates by the order of 50 per cent imply that in sectors where the unaccounted economy can be plausibly believed to flourish, it is larger than the officially estimated output from these sectors. Though this is not theoretically impossible, it certainly strains credibility that the phalanx of very competent statisticians who staff our Central Statistical Organization are failing to measure more than half the actual output of these sectors.

Second, there is little doubt that the black economy is a 'significant' phenomenon in India. It is significant in at least two senses: first, both casual empiricism and the plethora of 'professional' estimates already made suggest that a black economy in the order of 10 to 20 per cent of official GNP is both plausible and perhaps even probable; and, second, the power of this economy in influencing the nature of the polity and the thrust and impact of public policy may extend well beyond its numerical size.

Third, while it is relatively easy to scoff at efforts to estimate the

size of the black economy and even easier to find fault with individual estimates, such exercises are not without socially redeeming value. They are useful for several reasons. As noted above, they provide *some* basis, however fragile, for judging the significance of the phenomenon. Further, in the process of estimation these exercises can illuminate the underlying causes of the black economy. Finally, such endeavours can help us gauge the trend over time: whether the relative scale of the black economy is steady, growing apace or declining, perhaps in response to remedial policy.

The fourth and final point that needs to be made about the exercises proffering quantitative guesstimates of the black economy is that such efforts should not pre-empt all (or even most) of the analytical attention of social scientists, who have turned only recently to studying this curiously neglected subject. The time has surely come for scholars to devote increasing attention to analysing, with some rigour, the various possible, economic and social consequences of a sizeable black economy. It is to these potential consequences that I now turn.

The first, and most obvious, consequence of a substantial unaccounted economy is misinformation about the *actual* state of the economy. This could involve mistaken conceptions about the level and rate of growth of national output, its sectoral composition, the rate of savings and capital accumulation in the economy, the estimated bases for taxation, the split of economic activity between urban and rural areas, the level and composition of demand for key intermediate inputs such as power, transport and steel, and a number of other economic parameters, knowledge of which forms a crucial basis for the formulation of national economic policy.

A couple of examples can drive home this point. Our five-year planning exercises hinge on estimates of resource availability, and much has been made of the increase in savings performance of the Indian economy since the 1950s. The most commonly used indicator of savings performance is the ratio of gross savings to

GNP. If, in fact, the actual GNP (including the part that escapes accounting for 'black economy reasons') is significantly larger than what is recorded in official data, then the actual rate of savings may be lower than the recorded rate.¹

Furthermore, if the share of the unaccounted economy in the total economy has been increasing over time, the dimensions of the increase in the *rate* of savings observed in the official statistics may be suspect. Both these facts could significantly distort the estimation of resources available for planned allocation, the formulation of policies for resource mobilisation, and the interpretation of savings performance after the fact.

To take another example, extrapolation of the official estimates of the split of national output between urban and rural areas suggests that the disparity in output per capita between urban and rural areas has been growing over time. This in turn, has led some commentators to highlight the growing need for urban infrastructure to service the increasing shift of economic activity to urban locales. Since most of the black, unaccounted economy is likely to be found in urban areas, the shift noted above is likely to be much stronger than that computed from official GNP estimates. This, in turn, suggests that the need for planning, financing and building urban infrastructure is that much greater, if healthy structural change of the Indian economy is not to be seriously stunted by infrastructure bottlenecks.

The second, and equally obvious, consequence of the black economy is the loss of revenue that should have accrued to the exchequer if evasion and underreporting of economic activity were absent. At the simplest level such tax 'losses' are associated with lower (than otherwise) levels of public expenditure, including public investment, and/or higher deficit financing, with its attendant inflationary consequences.

1. This assumes that the underestimation of savings is proportionately less than underestimation of national output, which is plausible, given the estimation methods used.

Large scale tax evasion is also associated with serious and growing inequity in the burden of taxation.

First, there is the obvious inequity of people in economically similar situations paying different effective rates of tax, because some, typically the self-employed, are better placed to evade taxes than others, notably wage and salary earners. This inequity tends to sharpen with time as evasion induces higher rates of taxation, which, in turn, encourages greater evasion by those who are able and willing to evade. Thus, an increasingly greater proportion of the tax burden falls on a progressively shrinking effective tax base.

In a longer view, the growth of tax evasion and the black economy restricts the scope for radical fiscal reform. There are two main reasons for this. First, the growth of tax evasion is typically associated with the expansion of vested interests which benefit from the existing inequitable fiscal system and which are usually able to marshall their resources and influence against tax reforms more effectively than those who suffer from the inequities of the present system. Second, by its nature, radical fiscal reform involves a leap in the dark. Such leaps are less likely to be taken by a government strapped for revenues and apprehensive about the morale and effectiveness of its revenue administration.

A third consequence of a significant black economy is that the distribution of total household income (black and white) is likely to be even more unequal than that of white, or recorded, incomes. The opportunities for earning black incomes are likely to be skewed in favour of the 'haves' (such as industrialists, traders, real estate operators, construction contractors, lawyers, doctors, accountants, politicians, bureaucrats and artistes), rather than the 'have nots', such as smallholder farmers, landless rural labour and casual urban labour. And it is at least plausible that the secondary effects associated with expenditure from black incomes do not compensate for the initially greater skewness in the distribution of opportunities for earning these incomes.

Fourth, the existence of a sizeable black economy indicates that a large number of economic agents are devoting considerable energy to evading laws, covering their tracks, finding devious channels and loopholes around various tax laws and economic regulations, striving to appropriate the vast and shifting variety of scarcity premia spawned by the multitude of controls and restrictions imposed on an economy beset by underlying shortages, and otherwise engaging in 'rent-seeking' activity.

To their efforts must be added the endeavour of those seeking effectively to implement economic legislation and controls, or, alternatively, deploying their time and ingenuity in search of methods for extracting bribes and favours from those to whom the laws and controls pertain, in return for bending the rules or expediting certain approvals. It is surely not implausible to suggest that, in a more rational economic order, some of these energies might have been usefully spent in expanding output in legitimate channels. To that extent the black economy, and the conditions which cause it to flourish, exact a serious toll from the potential output of the nation.

Another deleterious effect of the black economy is the distortion in the pattern of consumption and production. It is widely believed that expenditure from black incomes is likely to be concentrated disproportionately on luxury goods and services. This, in turn, is debited with two unfortunate consequences. First, it triggers socially undesirable 'demonstration effects' which can weaken the propensity to save and strengthen the temptations for earning irregular incomes to match the consumption standards set by the 'black income wallahs'. Second, such expenditures directly spawn incentives for using scarce economic resources to produce luxury consumer goods and housing.

A number of writers have also claimed that the black economy can frustrate the government's control over the economy through monetary and credit policy. In particular, it is alleged that the existence of large reservoirs of 'black liquidity' (from

past streams of black income) can be deployed, at short notice, to frustrate restrictive monetary and credit policies initiated by the authorities. Some recent work by the author and an associate suggests that this particular adverse consequence of a black economy may have been exaggerated.²

The effects of the black economy need not be — indeed, are not — limited to the domestic sphere. Various estimates of smuggling and invoice manipulations in the nation's foreign trade indicate that such activities lead to substantial losses of precious foreign exchange, losses whose significance is likely to loom increasingly large now that the underlying balance of payments position has reverted to the more familiar paradigm of scarcity, after the brief flirtation with relative abundance in the late 1970s.

Furthermore, the combination of underlying foreign exchange scarcity and present policies of partial liberalisation of foreign trade and capital flows creates an uncomfortably large scope for foreign economic interests to sway important economic decisions against national interests.

Perhaps the most pernicious and lasting consequence of a substantial and unchecked black economy, and one which is least amenable to economic analysis, is the damage it does to the political and social fabric of the nation. When the political process feeds on the black economy, to the extent that is widely believed to be the case in India, it is difficult to insulate any major institution or public policy process from being misused to serve temporary private gains of individuals and groups. The injury to public policy making is incalculable, not the least because it is, in large measure, irreversible. A clean administration is not simply a catchy slogan for electioneering. It is also a guarantor of that modicum of predictability, efficiency and fairness which is necessary for sustained economic and social progress.

2. See Shankar Acharya and Srinivasa Madhur, 'Informal Credit Markets and Black Money; Do they Frustrate Monetary Policy?', *Mimeo*, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, February, 1983.

Deteriorating situation

D. R. PENDSE

SEVERAL years ago, black money was referred to as 'the underground economy'. Soon this 'underground economy' came to surface and became 'the parallel economy'. Now it is referred to as 'the sovereign economy', which 'has taken full command of the market mechanism and practically submerged the so-called official transactions or regular economic activities.' Interestingly, the problem has thus been worsening even if, judging from the mass of pronouncements, speeches, articles, and seminars on black money, there is also an increasing concern about it in society. It is hoped that this article will succeed in having a fresh look at the totality of this problem.

Many serious economic problems are facing the country, but black money is a problem with a difference. When we talk about the problem of, say, poverty or unemployment, it is the poor or the unemployed who suffer from the problem. Medically, when we talk about the problem of, say, cancer, it is the cancer patient who suffers from it. Not so in the case of black money. Persons who have the black money do not seem to have any problem themselves, but seem to create problems for those who do not have it — i.e., to the honest common man and even to the government itself.

This is because black money is free from all handicaps of controls, delays or taxes. Once it enters an economy, black money flourishes with a frightening momentum. In contrast, the white money sector of the economy becomes ever narrower

and, being handcuffed by all sorts of restrictions, comes continuously under greater strain to fulfil any given objective of economic policy. This is an unjust system. Unless checked in time, it can engulf and ruin the economic, social and moral fabric of the country.

Economists and purists are quick in making several fine distinctions between, say, black money, black income, black wealth, in monetary or non-monetary assets, parallel economy, and so on. For this article, however, with due apologies to them, I would use the term black money rather loosely to cover any of these phenomena. I would divide them into only two broad categories. First, there is money which is black from the moment it is earned, because it is earned from an illegal source. A *pugri* commonly taken for 'selling' a standard-rent flat in metropolitan areas, prices higher than any statutorily controlled prices received for selling scarce commodities (like cement or steel until recently), bribes of all sorts, vast fortunes made from foreign exchange fiddles, from smuggling, from under-invoicing, and over-invoicing, gambling, *matka*, and the like, are all covered in this category.

The second category is of money which is earned from perfectly legal and legitimate sources, but which becomes 'black' simply because the income earner conceals his income in order to evade payment of tax on it. High incomes earned by professionals like lawyers and doctors will

all come under this category of 'black money' to the extent that they are not disclosed in their tax returns; because the services which these professionals render are otherwise perfectly legitimate. In short, the two main categories of black money are (i) black money earned from illegal sources and (ii) that earned from legal sources.

Incidentally, money (or other assets like jewellery, gold or other valuables) obtained from thefts and robberies, though of course, illegal, would be excluded from the first category mentioned above or indeed from all discussions on black money, because of an important distinction: The robber gets the money by force or against the wishes of the person who is being robbed, but the person who gives a *pugri* or a bribe or pays a black market premium does so voluntarily in the sense that he has the choice of not paying the *pugri* or not paying the black market price if he is willing to go without the particular goods or services. Thus, the illegal-source black money transactions are in a sense the result of free choice by the two parties to the transaction:

Various economists and other commentators have ventured to offer their own estimates of the current magnitude of the flow of black money in the Indian economy. Dr. D.K. Rangnekar, a member of the former Wanchoo Committee on Direct Taxation, had actually put forward a formula to estimate black money, and recently estimated¹ that black income in 1980-81 was Rs. 18,241 crores (which came to about 16.3% of India's GNP of Rs. 1,12,156 cr. in that year), and suggested that the compound rate of growth of black money is in the neighbourhood of 18% per annum at current prices. Another study² estimated that black income was about half of the official income; in other words that it is about 1/3rd of the total GNP. Prof. J.C. Sande-

sara³ who made a study of the various estimates, concluded that 'black money may presently be over ten per cent but under fifteen per cent of the reported GNP.'

I remain convinced that by its very nature, it is not really possible to make anything like a good estimate of the magnitude of black money. With great respect to the authors, all such estimates must, in my view, remain guestimates. Even the Union Finance Minister, while recently conceding that black money was dogging the economy, refused to hazard a guess about the estimate of its size (Rajya Sabha, October 5, 1982). So I am in good company.

However, if some quantification must be offered, I think it will be reasonable to assume conservatively a lower than middle of the range of the various estimates. This would place black money at roughly about 10% of the GNP, i.e., about Rs. 15,000 crores in 1982 at current prices.

To ordinary citizens, such astronomical figures fail to bring home the magnitude of the problem. For them, it would perhaps be more interesting to note that Rs. 15,000 crores per year would work out to over Rs. 1.70 crores per hour on the basis of round-the-clock working throughout the 365 days in a year. Seen from another angle, it means that if this estimate is reasonable, in our country the quantum of black money generated every single hour, is more than the annual income of 170 honest income-tax payers, each earning more than Rs. one lakh per year and paying tax at the highest tax slab.

It is also difficult to indicate with confidence as to how much of the black money comes from the first category mentioned above, viz., illegal source income, and how much from the second, viz., the legal source (or tax-evaded) incomes. Some studies with reference to the USA suggest that the second category accounted for about 75 per cent of the black money there. To offer nothing better than a hunch,

I would, however, say that in India, the first category is likely to be more important than the second.

The black money economy is often referred to as a 'parallel economy', the presumption apparently being that the white money economy and the black money economy do not meet each other. I do not share this presumption. The black money and the white money sectors are perpetually interlocked and conversion of black money into white money or vice versa, is taking place all the time. When a salaried employee purchases a small flat, he usually pays for it from his savings from Provident Fund, Gratuity, etc., all of which is white money. But the part of the price of the flat for which he does not get a proper receipt represents to that extent conversion of his white money into black money in the hands of the builder.

On the other hand, if a black moneywallah spends lavishly at a five-star hotel, for which the hotel gives a receipt, his black money is converted into white at the hands of the hotel. Ditto when he purchases a Special Bearer Bond. Several such instances can be given, which all go to show that the black money economy is not really parallel to, but is closely interlocked with the white money economy. The interlocking is so frequent that facilitating conversion of black money into white or vice versa has itself now become big business. But that is another story. Incidentally, this frequent conversion is one more factor that makes any estimate of black money unrealistic.

Black money is not a phenomenon restricted to India. Several developed as well as developing countries are living with it and suffering from it. In recent years, there has been considerable concern among the economists and the policy-makers around the world about the impact of black money. In the USA, particularly, this concern is very clearly seen. A recent article⁴ published by the IMF, estimated

1. Rangnekar, D.K.. The Parallel Economy — Size and Dimension of Black Money: 'Business Standard', Calcutta, November 30, 1982.

2. Gupta, Poonam and Gupta, Sanjeev: Estimates of the Unreported Economy in India. 'Economic and Political Weekly', January 16, 1982.

3. Sandesara, J.C. Estimates of Unreported Economy in India. 'Economic and Political Weekly', March 20, 1982.

4. Tanzi, Vito. 'Underground Economy Built on Illicit Pursuits is Growing Concern of Economic Policy Makers'. IMF Survey, February 4, 1980.

that in the USA in 1976 black money was generated to the tune of about U.S. \$ 135 bn. This was roughly equal to 8 per cent of the U.S. GNP at market prices. Out of this, about U.S. \$ 100 bn. were from legal-source income, i.e., tax-evaded income on self-employment, wages and salaries, interest, dividend, pension, annuities, capital gains and others. The remaining 35 bn. dollars came from 'illegal source income', e.g., from illegal drugs, book-making, numbers, gambling, and prostitution. Another, rather a chilling article,⁵ argued that apart from the oil business, which had revenue of over US \$ 365 bn. in 1980, 'organised crime' which includes all black money transactions, was the largest single industry in the U.S. with revenue of more than U.S. \$ 150 bn.

In the U.K., black money⁶ is referred to as 'fraud that Government ignores' and the Inland Revenue Department⁷ itself believes that it constitutes 6 to 8 per cent of the GDP. There is a growing criticism there that government's actions against black money only result in punishing petty evaders like waitresses, plumbers, babysitters and the like.

In Belgium, a recent study⁸ concluded that the black economy which includes not only undeclared income but also illicit earnings such as drug trafficking and smuggling, increased from 11% in 1960 to 15% of GDP in 1980.

In Sweden, even skilled workers pay upto 45% income tax and have found that they can earn more by going on the dole and earning undeclared income from moonlighting jobs.

Unlike the open economies, in the USSR nobody talks about black money; but in view of the widespread reported shortages of the day-to-day consumption goods,

5. Cook, James. *The Invisible Enterprise*, (Forbes, Sept. 29, 1980).

6. 'Financial Times', London, March 20, 1980.

7. 'Financial Times', London, August 13, 1982.

8. 'Financial Times', London, November 2, 1982.

and in view of the price controls, it is believed that a large number of under-the-counter transactions must be taking place.

In Zaire, according to a recent report⁹ kickbacks were the order of the day and high government authorities have private fortunes exceeding US \$ 4 bn., said to be held in Swiss bank accounts.

Nearer home, in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also the black money problem haunts the authorities and voluntary disclosure schemes are offered as incentives to black-moneyholders.

Many more such examples of various countries can be given. They do not justify any sense of complacency in tackling the problem, but they underline how gigantic is the challenge facing the policy-makers in our country.

Among the manifold factors responsible for the ever-increasing generation of black money, stringent controls is perhaps the most important. Under the phrase 'controls', I include not only the statutory controls, but also the bureaucratic and administrative controls, and the delays, the procedural wrangles, and all the rest of it.

It was during the Second World War that wide-ranging controls were imposed on various economic activities and black money assumed notable proportions. Most western countries, though directly affected by war, demolished controls after the war as fast as possible. But we persisted with them. It was Gandhiji who saw the great dangers in the situation and warned the nation time and again about controls and black money. For example, on the 3rd November, 1947, during his prayer meeting, Gandhiji said,¹⁰ 'Controls give rise to fraud, suppression, intensification of black money and to artificial scarcity.' Thirty-five years after these prophetic words, we see that Gandhiji knew his people best. Yet he continues to be ignored.

9. 'Time', January 10, 1983, p. 13.

10. Jhaveri, V.K. and Tendulkar, D.G. 'Mahatma, Life of M.K. Gandhi' (Vol. VIII).

Several illustrations can be given in support of this point. For example, for a long time, the statutorily controlled price of cement remained at the ridiculously artificial level of Rs. 28 per bag, while consumers were obliged to pay for it anything over Rs. 100 per bag in black money. People who purchased cement at such fancy prices to build houses or to do whatever else they wished to with it, again received black money and the chain reaction continued.

The National Council of Applied Economic Research, a government-financed research-body, which is not famous for making exaggerated statements, concluded in a Report¹¹ that on modest estimates, during the period 1965-66 to 1974-75 black money to the tune of Rs. 840 crores was created as a result of the operation of price controls in respect of just the six following commodities:

Commodity	Black Money Created (Rs. crores)
Urea	35
Cement	70
Paper	10
Automobile tyres	100
Vanaspati	125
Steel	500
	840

The Dagli Committee on controls in its Report¹² published in May 1979 also said without mincing words that, 'price and distribution controls have in the past led to the generation of black money on a significant scale.'

In contrast, the bureaucratic controls and the innumerable delay mechanism are so designed that, as pointed out by L.K. Jha,¹³ 'they do

11. National Council of Applied Economic Research: A Study of Price Control and Impact of Excise Duty on Selected Industries, p. 44 (June 1978).

12. Government of India: Report of the Committee on Controls and Subsidies (Chairman: Mr. Vadilal Dagli, May 1979).

13. Jha, L.K.: G.L. Mehta Memorial Lecture, Madras, Jan. 4, 1983.

not give either the green light to proceed or the red light to stop but they are set for ever at amber.' Naturally they are an excellent vehicle for the creation of black money by giving bribes to the people concerned. Black money of this type is commonly known as 'peace money', 'speed money' or 'paper weights'. Abroad, such payments are sometimes grouped under 'lobbying'.

When such controls are stringent, the share of the 'illegal-source black money' will be higher as compared to the 'legal source' or 'tax-evaded black money'. That is mainly why I was tempted to the earlier hunch that in India, as compared to the USA, the share of illegal-source black money is likely to be larger than that of the legal-source black money.

Often we come across well-conceived schemes designed to benefit the citizens of the country. But their implementation turns out to be so crooked that the actual benefit to the public is insignificant and they become a fertile ground for bumper crops of black money, particularly where government funds are involved. Thus, it is commonly believed that a not negligible percentage of government outlays of thousands of crores of rupees on construction every year go to the pockets of contractors and other vested interests. There was so much criticism that Maharashtra's prestigious and world-famous Employment Guarantee Scheme was being misused by unscrupulous persons to make black money, that government had to appoint a committee to investigate various instances of corruption under this scheme, and in one single district, this committee is reported to have found more than 70 such instances involving over a lakh of rupees.

Such malpractices are said to give rise to black money, known in several areas such as railways, airlines, defence, electricity connections, telephone connections, State transport and what not.

An environment of scarcities and inflation is an ideal breeding ground for black money, more so if people

expect the scarcities to aggravate or prices to continue to rise at the same or faster rates. Shortages make hoarding profitable. There is a scramble to get possession of the scarce goods, even by paying 'on' money (another common phrase for black money) or by borrowing money in the black market to finance hoarding operations.

Even when there is a buyers' market, black money may have an important 'role' to play! It is then the producers' or sellers' turn to bribe their likely clients to place their orders with them, in preference to other competitors, by paying their clients some under-the-counter discounts — i.e., black money.

As an illustration as to how black money (or in effect a black discount) is received by buyers or their agents, let us turn for a moment to the rural sector of our country.

Unscrupulous contractors pay to workers much less as wages than what they (i.e., the contractors) claim from government. Similarly, when farmers bring their produce to the market for selling to the government procurement agency, the 'graders' insist that the farmers accept a price for a grade lower than the grades shown on the bill. Otherwise their produce is liable to be rejected. Thus, the rural workers or the farmers sign (or place their thumb impression) for receiving a higher amount than what they actually do; and the contractors and the graders make substantial black money in the process.

High tax rates are the principal cause underlying the generation of 'legal-source black money'. To give a striking example, it may be mentioned that until 1972-73 the maximum marginal rate of income-tax was 97.75 per cent for income exceeding Rs. 2 lakhs. At that time, when, say, a surgeon having already a declared income of more than Rs. 2 lakhs, performed another tonsils operation and earned Rs. one thousand as his net fees, he had two alternatives. Either he could disclose that additional income, pay Rs. 977 as additional tax to the government and keep for himself

Rs. 23; at this rate, in order to be able to keep for himself Rs. 1,000 he would have to earn an additional Rs. 44,445. Because, on Rs. 44,445, the tax at 97.75 per cent would be Rs. 43,445, so that he would be left with Rs. 1,000 for himself. The other alternative was simply not to disclose that extra Rs. 1,000 to the income-tax authorities! In other words, this surgeon had to spend his time, energy and labour to perform forty four similar tonsils operations to stay honest; or alternatively save all that botheration by performing just one single operation and not disclosing this income.

In all professions, this was the sort of story being repeated, and the absurdity of high tax rates was driving intelligent, educated professionals possessing rare skills in high demand, to become dishonest citizens and tax evaders. Had the tax rates been reasonable the situation would have been radically different. For example, if the maximum marginal income tax rate were a sensible 50 per cent, in the above case, in order to be able to keep another Rs. 1,000 to himself, the surgeon would have had to earn only Rs. 2,000 more.

It is sometimes argued that it is human nature to evade taxes irrespective of whether the tax rates are high or not. There may or may not be some truth in this argument, but it is very difficult to verify it. Two points however seem clear. The higher the tax rates, the higher will be the number of instances of tax evasion. Secondly, in case of tax evasion (as I suppose in case of many other crimes) once an assessee evades taxes and gets away with it, he gets used to it, and it becomes increasingly difficult to convert him again to be an honest tax payer even if tax rates are reduced. Good government should, therefore, think twice before raising rates of taxes which drive honest people to dishonesty.

Incidentally, the process of generation of black money by tax evasion is by no means restricted to income-tax, wealth tax and other direct taxes. It is believed to be widespread in respect of excise duties, sales taxes and the rest. As was

once said, 'An excise inspection is only an excise inspector.'

During the Second World War and soon thereafter, the few people who started indulging in black money felt guilty about it; society at large looked down upon them with the contempt that they deserved. They were also afraid of the machinery of law. They remained in low key, and tried to keep their activities away from public gaze. Days have changed now. Not only is there no social stigma attached to making black money, but the attitudes have become so perverted that conspicuous consumption and life styles which cannot be sustained without massive support of black money, have become almost a status symbol! People who earn and spend such black money are not at all criticized. Many of them are admired and envied. The few innocents and the patriotic close their eyes, but can do no more.

Another change in society's attitudes is noticed from the growing disenchantment among the high income-earning professionals or intelligentsia about the inefficient and selfish functioning of the government system. They commonly argue that they would have been happy to pay all taxes due even if the rates were high, if they had some confidence that their money would be used by government efficiently, honestly and genuinely in the interest of the common man. They point out that what they see in fact is the opposite. Much of the money levied by government from them as taxes is poured into inefficient, loss-making and mismanaged public sector enterprises, or goes to unscrupulous contractors and others, or is squandered on world jaunts for the politicians and high bureaucrats. 'Why should we then pay taxes?' they ask in effect. There may be some weakness in this sort of an argument; but it is certainly a factor contributing to tax evasion and thus adding to the stock of black money.

Indian culture and civilization has accepted and cherished certain values and traditions for thousands of years. Providing adequately for one's wife, children, and other close relatives or friends and dependents

with the hope that they would continue to enjoy the fruits of one's own wealth, even after one's death, are among these. In the name of socialistic ideology, we now try to interfere with these values by imposing penal taxes on income, savings, wealth or estates. Rightly or wrongly, people resent such interference as government policy is too much at variance with the citizens' individual interests. Therefore they try to find various ways of getting around it, either by evading taxes or by making provisions in black money.

One hundred years ago, i.e., in 1882, chief secretaries in India or members of the various Boards received salaries in the range of £ 3,000 per annum (equal to Rs 4,500 per month or, at today's prices, over Rs. 1,30,000 per month). High salaries was obviously a very powerful lure for the ICS candidates of that day. Justifying these salaries, Lord Cornwallis said that a civil servant should be kept satisfied with legal emoluments so as to persuade him to give up illegal perquisites.

After independence, in 1956, Prof. Kaldor¹⁴ discussed at length the importance of this factor as a possible source of corruption and black money. In his Report on the Indian Tax Reform, he said, 'I have a feeling that it is fundamentally wrong to pay officers, on whose attitude and conduct very large sums of money may depend, at extremely meagre rates.'

If anything, the situation has aggravated since then. First, as a result of controls, and the licence and the permit raj inflicted on the private sector, vast powers are now concentrated in the hands of senior bureaucrats. Secondly, inflation has made sharp inroads into the purchasing power of their salaries. Thirdly, the maximum income tax on their salaries in 1882 was barely 2.6%. Finally, while senior public servants are exhorted to shun the temptations of conspicuous expenditure, be patriotic and adopt simple life-styles, they find themselves surrounded by a world of high con-

sumption and black money, without an iota of social stigma.

Nobody will seriously plead for restoring the hundred-year old parity in real terms. There is no case for it in terms of either philosophy or policy. Nevertheless, the close links between black money and such low and declining salaries should be clear.

According to several commentators, politics and election laws are the most important underlying cause for the generation of vast amounts of black money which needs to be mentioned. The last Lok Sabha elections (1980) can be considered as an illustration.

In all 4,633 candidates contested those elections. We may assume that about one thousand of them were not serious about the contest, which still left 3,633 serious contestants. According to the current law, not more than Rs. 35,000 can be spent by any particular candidate for his election, nor are limited companies allowed to contribute to election expenditure of any candidate or political party.

We all know that the actual expenditure of any serious candidate must have been far in excess of this limit of Rs. 35,000. This unrealistic law, however, remains on paper and all the expenditure which candidates incur in their contest, over and above the legally prescribed limit, has to be generated or found in black money.

I talked to some knowledgeable people and they all assured me that the expenditure of candidates seriously contesting that election in 1980 could not have been less than one rupee per voter, i.e., not less than Rs. five lakhs per candidate for an average Lok Sabha constituency of about five lakh voters. Every such candidate must have therefore found an amount of at least Rs. 4,65,000 in black money to finance his contest. Many candidates are believed to have spent several times this amount. Even ignoring such cases, it would appear that black money equal to Rs 168.9 crores (or, say, Rs. 170 crores) must have been

14. Kaldor, N.: Indian Tax Reform — Report of a Survey (June 1956).

spent during elections by the 3,633 serious candidates.

Knowledgeable people also candidly admit that if elected, many contestants, during their five-year tenure, hope to 'make up' more than what they spend. But they have also to take into account the possibility of their losing the election. After all, out of these 3,633 candidates, only 542 were ultimately elected. Therefore, it would be not surprising if, in order to be able to spend Rs. 4,65,000 of black money, practical candidates collect much more than that amount and keep aside a portion as provision for the possibility of their defeat! The actual black money which is accumulated will thus far exceed Rs. 170 crores.

Further, some unscrupulous sections of society must, in the first place, earn black money at least of this magnitude to enable them to part with this amount to the contestants to finance their elections. They would not part with Rs. 170 crores of their black money unless they are helped, in the first round, to earn black money of significantly higher amounts. These sections of society are not charitable institutions; they have an extraordinary sense of money (if of nothing else). They would not incur this expenditure by way of donations in black money if they do not consider it to be good future investment. Making allowance for both these 'multipliers', economists are now led to speculate that black money of the magnitude of at least Rs. 400 crores would have been 'obliged' to be generated in the system, just to finance the Lok Sabha elections because of the present framework of the law.

Since I wrote¹⁵ and spoke about this tie between the elections and black money two years ago, much greater awareness of this factor is noticed, and a few further points need to be recorded.

(i) At the All-India Economics Conference at Jabalpur in December 1982, there was a long discus-

sion on the parallel economy in India, and economists largely agreed (which they rarely do on any question!) that this was the central factor responsible for the generation of black money.

(ii) The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee said in February 1982 that 'our political system had become polluted and was the fountainhead of all corruption', but the Finance Minister, not unexpectedly, told Parliament in October 1982, that the 'percentage of black money in financing elections is negligible.'

(iii) Recent informal discussions indicate that the cost of contesting is now much higher; not one rupee per voter assumed for the 1980 elections in the above paragraphs, but over Rs. 2 per voter — some would put it at Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 per voter in many constituencies — for the 1983 Assembly elections in Andhra, Karnataka and Manipur. We are also told that election is only a beginning. The post-election scene — defections, etc. — is also becoming a big but fluctuating business, also financed out of black money!

(iv) A recent article¹⁶ points out: 'Every candidate, winner or loser, has to file a fully attested affidavit after the election that he had not spent more than Rs. 25,000 for an Assembly seat. Almost all of them (the candidates) — one wishes and hopes that there are some proverbial 'honourable exceptions' — start their noble career as guardians of democracy, by filing patently false affidavits.'

Various estimates given above are admittedly based on a series of assumptions. I consider them to be reasonable but would welcome a more informed discussion. If such a large amount of black money is needed to help finance our elections, where does it come from? How is it generated? Who has it and what is the quid pro quo? These questions arise naturally. They are important questions; but their consideration is

well beyond the limited scope of this article.

This list of underlying causes of black money is by no means complete. But the overall impact is year. A quick and crude estimate suggested that loss of tax revenue is perhaps about Rs. 3,000 crores per year at present, which is about twice the gross yield of personal income-tax. The whole planning process is brought to naught and several economic policy decisions go awry, because they are based on macroeconomic indicators which ignore the large black money component. In effect, the presence of a large black money sector means that fewer and fewer honest citizens are paying for the misdeeds of the more and more numerous dishonest citizens indulging in black money transactions. The perilous effects of black money on the nation's character are long-lasting, but they are broadly well-known and need not be repeated.

Several remedies have been tried so far. Three of them, viz.,

- (1) demonetisation,
- (2) voluntary disclosure scheme, and
- (3) raids,

were discussed at length in my earlier article to show that they should be considered as failures, if not just eye-wash. I have had no reason to change that conclusion in respect of these.

Three more need to be mentioned.

(i) The Special Bearer Bonds were introduced in January 1981, and were on sale upto April 30, and again from December 1, 1981 to January 9, 1982. Actual collections amounted to a total of Rs. 963.93 crores. The initial response to this scheme was below expectations, partly because of conflicting interpretations of some of the clauses in the scheme, and also because certain constitutional aspects of the scheme were referred to, and then cleared by the Supreme Court.

(ii) A moderate and informal market for transactions in SBBs is believed to be working. For a good many days, the SBBs commanded a

15. Pendse, D.R.: The Problem of Black Money: 'Economic Times', March 19 and 20, 1981.

16. Berindranath Dewan: Democracy on Death-bed? 'Democratic World' May 30, 1982.

premium, which was natural and beyond doubt. Black money robs the government of hundreds of crores of tax revenues year after expected. But later they were sold at a discount, which was partly because of rumours, subsequently discounted by the government, that fake SBBs were also circulating in the market.

(iii) The SBB scheme is very weak on moral, economic or financial grounds. However, it needs to be considered here only with respect to its impact on the problem of black money. From the point of the owners of black money, the SBBs are more attractive and more lenient than any other scheme attempted earlier. The question remains whether measures that pamper black money wallahs can be treated as measures to 'tackle' black money. Secondly, it was not commonly appreciated that the main considerations with the Finance Minister as regards the particular timing of the scheme was the hope of giving props to the precarious budgetary positions in 1980-81 and in 1981-82. Thus, the SBB scheme does not even profess to curb black money; and, as an anti-black money measure, I consider it to be another non-event.

In most transactions of urban real estate — land, buildings, flats — black money is known to play a significant part. Under the Income-Tax Act (Sections 269 (C) and 269 (AB), government is now empowered to acquire property if the difference between the apparent price of a transaction and the fair market value is more than 15 per cent.

In three years, from 1977-78 to 1979-80, acquisition proceedings were initiated in 11,461 cases; but orders for acquisition were passed only in 134 cases and, only in 5 cases, properties actually vested in government. The Estimates Committee¹⁷ commented unequivocally that this was poor show. No doubt, the government representatives explained some very good reasons for the poor show; and some further stringent amendments to these pro-

visions have come into effect from July 1982. It is too early to assess their likely success in curbing the generation and circulation of black money. One earnestly hopes that this measure does not degenerate into another avenue for delays, favouritism and corruption.

For the last two years or so, several economic policy measures towards the opening-up of the economy have been taken by government. Two illustrations are particularly relevant. In February 1981, steel prices (bars and billets) were decontrolled, and the long era of black market premia came to an end. Similarly, in February 1982, absurd statutory control of cement prices at Rs. 28 per bag was replaced by dual pricing, banishing the black market and the black money in it, with one stroke.

Both these measures were trebly blessed, because quite apart from attacking one of the roots of black money, they benefited the actual and potential producers, as well as the government, without in the least harming the consumers.

I cannot claim to have the full answer to why these remedies failed but some lessons are worth pondering over!

In the first place, most of the remedies adopted, except the last one mentioned above, have been of a cosmetic nature. While a massive flow of black money kept on flooding all sectors of the economy, the remedies were directed mainly to control some tid-bits of this flow, without any effective attempt to stop the flow itself.

Secondly, the very philosophy behind measures like the VD scheme and SBB scheme is not correct. Far from penalising the people concerned, actually they pamper them. Honest citizens keep on feeling sorry that they are honest. Many of them shed tears that they have either no 'opportunity' or no 'guts' and courage for making black money! Such an environment is not conducive to the elimination of black money.

Thirdly, in the world of black money, something like the theory

of 'the show must go on' seems to operate. A particular person making black money may be penalised, may go to jail or may even die, but somebody else takes over and thus the process of generating black money goes on. Black money is more than the people who make black money. As a recent article put it aptly, 'It is an outfit, a syndicate, an organisation, a combination, and it's designed to perpetuate itself. "We go and indict everybody", says one investigator, "and put everybody in jail, and the next day somebody else is right there to take over." We really do not achieve anything. We punish people who are guilty of a crime, but we do not resolve the situation. The organisation still remains.'

Fourthly, people seem to be losing confidence in government's ability to protect them against various problems and therefore they start building their own protective walls to preserve themselves. With far-flung and wide-ranging controls, whatever people wish to do for securing this protection, seems difficult to achieve without black money. For example, in pursuit of self-preservation, people turn to black money to escape inflation, the incidence of a high tax burden, or the take-over of private property without compensation.

Finally, and most importantly, measures to curb black money have little chance of succeeding in a society in which numerically tiny but structurally very powerful sections are benefiting from black money and are thus developing a vested interest in perpetuating an environment which helps it make black money. The smugglers and other offenders of economic laws, the unscrupulous among the politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, professionals or other black-rich are among those that seem to be thus benefiting.

So long as they remain powerful and they know that they owe their power to the power of black money, would they easily let effective measures be taken to curb black money? And can any 'measures' adopted with the tacit connivance of such powerful vested interests,

17. The Estimates Committee, Seventh Lok Sabha: 9th Report (April 1981).

be genuine measures, or be just attempts to lull the gullible public into believing that government is alive to the problem?

Taking a practical view, a total and permanent elimination of black money is unlikely to be achieved, at any rate, in the near future. The former Finance Minister, Venkataraman, presumably shared this view when he said in the Lok Sabha that the phenomenon of black money was present not only in India, but had spread to all market economies, and therefore a person who was able to find a solution would deserve a Nobel prize. The implications surely are, first, that the solutions tried so far have had no salutary effect (as was seen above) and, secondly, that the problem had assumed such proportions that a durable solution had somehow got to be found; and that it would be shortsighted to brush aside the problem under the carpet.

Effective action should aim first at ensuring that at least any further proliferation of black money is arrested, and then at containing and progressively eliminating this social evil from our society. It is in this light that, without laying claim to Venkataraman's Nobel prize, a few suggestions are made in the following final section, which contains what may be called my five-point plan to fight black money. There is undoubtedly merit in several other suggestions made by other experts. But to get the best results it is advisable to begin with and to concentrate on a few of them, and the following are my own priorities.

My first suggestion was that government should, without any delay, appoint a high power commission to examine this problem in all its aspects and make recommendations. After I discussed at length various aspects of this suggestion in an article,¹⁸ this point was raised in Parliament also, when government conceded¹⁹ that 'of the various Com-

mittees and Commissions appointed by the government after Independence to examine tax laws and procedures, the terms of only one of the Committees, namely, the Direct Taxes Enquiry Committee (Wanchoo Committee, 1971), contained specific reference to the problem of Black Money'; and, further, that black money was playing havoc with the economy. But all that government has now done is to request the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, a Delhi-based research organisation, to study some aspects of the problem — mainly estimating the quantum, and identifying the sectors, the methods and the causes. It is interesting that the Institute is *not* asked to suggest remedies. Further, the fact that the Institute has been given two years to complete the study, is evidence of the seriousness (!) with which the government views the problem that is playing havoc with the economy.

In fact, what is necessary is that there should be a full-fledged commission set up under the Commission of Enquiry Act, and it should have quasi-judicial powers, particularly powers to take evidence on oath, to conduct proceedings *in camera*, and to assure secrecy of evidence tendered before it. It should be asked to examine the growth of black money in the Indian economy and its underlying causes. It should try to benefit from the experience of other countries and should suggest wide-ranging reforms, i.e., economic, political, social and others, to tackle the problem. Further, government should make a firm public commitment to accept and act upon its unanimous recommendations.

The second suggestion in my five-point plan is that, with one sweep, government should show the courage to dismantle as many controls as possible. I am aware and am convinced that in a planned economy, some controls — neutral and directional — may be necessary. But we are today a long long way from it. Our experience with controls has been deplorable. Our experience with a massive operation-decontrol could not be worse. In fact, our few recent experiments with decontrol and freeing the economy have been very

encouraging. It is worth giving de-controls a chance. For once, let us take the advice of the Father of our Nation.

Thirdly, tax rates should be reduced considerably to sensible levels and the procedure for collection of taxes should be simplified drastically along with an assurance that there will be no yearly and mid-yearly tampering with these.

Conflicting views are expressed by academicians and politicians as to whether a reduction of tax rates will lead to a fall or a rise in revenues. In the context of the problem of black money, surely, the criterion to judge the merits of reducing tax rates is *not* whether it will affect tax revenues unfavourably or not, but whether it will help curb the generation of black money. Unless of course somebody is seriously arguing that the reduction in tax rates will lead to such a substantial fall in tax revenues that the generation of any black money as a result of the high tax rates is a lesser evil in comparison to the substantial sacrifice of tax revenues.

Fourthly, all policies and laws are as good as their implementation and enforcement. We therefore need to devise an effective system of substantial rewards and deterrent penalties for the bureaucracy and others holding major portfolios in the public sector to ensure that policies are executed firmly and fairly and in their true spirit, and not merely in their letter.

The final suggestion in my five-point plan would be to make fundamental changes in the election laws and practices. According to some thinkers, nothing short of a complete revamping of the present political and election system would do. Professionally, it would be presumptuous on my part in my capacity as a mere economist, to suggest what these changes should be. This would be a major area of enquiry for the Commission on Black Money which I proposed earlier. But one point is clear even to me. There is no hope of tackling the problem of black money so long as the present election laws remain in force, and are implemented in the way they are.

18. Pendse, D.R. Wanted: A Commission on Black Money. 'Indian Express', October 1, 1981.

19. Rajya Sabha: Reply to Unstarred Question No. 167, October 5, 1982 by Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance.

Lumpenisation

KAMAL NAYAN KABRA

AMONG the many indicators of the 'growth' of the Indian economy, it has yet not become customary to include the growth of the parallel or black economy. This is so despite the general acknowledgement that the black economy has an inherent compulsion for self-expansion which is further lubricated by the overall processes of growth, both induced and autonomous. Such an open encounter with the growth of the black economy is avoided presumably on account of the laudatory connotation which indicators of 'growth' are commonly perceived to possess. Apparently, a tainted category like the black economy can hardly find a place in such exalted company as the GNP, the quality of life, literacy rate, sectoral rates of growth, etc. Since western social science has not recognised the growth of the black economy, despite the none too infrequent references to it, the Indian social sciences

have followed suit as is their habit.

However, the exclusion of the black economy as a factor of 'growth' is a far more serious business. For one thing, the inherent links between the growth of both the black and the legal components of the economy are neither obvious nor well-investigated. In fact, the manner in which the reported and unreported segments of economic activity operate and link up with each other, in the operational contest, blurs any sharp analytical distinction between the two. Such conceptual theoretical inadequacies are further compounded by the absence of any meaningful, reliable and regular monitoring and estimation of the size, forms and mechanisms of the black economy.

The year 1982 produced some telling evidence of these features. Yet another study was commissioned by the Finance Ministry, again

to do a one-point-of-time exercise to estimate the size of the black economy, along with, probably, that of its sectoral components. That a regular machinery for our constant monitoring of the black economy in all its aspects is an urgent necessity is yet to be realised in the relevant quarters. It bears testimony to the casual treatment given to the black money phenomenon. How can an annual economic survey be prepared or, for that matter, how can the apex monetary authority in the country present its annual report on the economy without so much as mentioning the black economy when the latter is presumed to have become, as a columnist put it, the CIA of the Indian economy which is blamed for everything that happens or does not happen? What is signified by all these facts is that the operation of the black economy in a country in which 'every minute black money is being created' (as a Finance Minister pointed out in Parliament) is yet to be incorporated as an operational consideration in our policy processes.

The argument that the black economy is difficult to estimate cannot be formidable enough for not keeping tabs on it. For, apart from the availability of so many alternative methods, howsoever tentative and limited they may be for giving informed guesses, one can set up a number of indicators of the black economy which may be systematically monitored. Among such indicators, Malcom Adiseshiah mentioned the following: velocity of money incomes, rates of return in various branches of business, taxable value of transactions (e.g., in real estate) as compared to their market values, relative rates of growth of prices of silver, gold, jewellery, precious stones, hard currencies vis-a-vis the general price level, etc. In any case, only by a systematic and regular monitoring of the black economy by competent, independent agencies, can one hope to acquire a better understanding of the scale and mechanism of its operations.

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Neglect of the parallel economy among the performance or growth indicators is related to another im-

portant factor concerning the paradigm of development theories which lacks concepts like mal-development or those of anti-development. The black economy is an important indicator of mal-development which has received but ad hoc, occasional, attention for symbolic intervention. It is apparent that we have had some occasional State interventions connected with the black economy, but these fail to qualify as economic policy. Hence, there is absence of concern with mal-development and there is lack of systematic economic policies concerning the black economy. The powerful State apparatus dealing with the economy does not even obtain and provide periodic data on the black economy. It goes without saying that this is not for want of expertise, but essentially an outcome of the symbiotic relationship which has come to exist between the black economy on the one hand, and the dominant and ruling segments of the polity on the other. (See, Kabra, Kamal Nayan, *The Black Economy in India: Problems and Policies*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 49-60).

The absence of such data, or systematic quantitative or qualitative evidence, cannot, however, prevent an expanding understanding and growing concern over the black economy as India lives through the eighties. News items about seizures and raids, reports of rampant corruption, estimates made by economists and statisticians and, most important of all, other deeply disturbing social consequences caused by the black economy indicate that it has reached unprecedented proportions. Given its essential character of black income, savings, and investment circuit, its extended reproduction over time yields an expanding black economy.

The failure of public interventions to initiate any worthwhile step, despite the many recommended by official expert committees, destroyed the only hope for curbing the growth of this pernicious sector. Hence, in the absence of countervailing forces, the inherent nature of the black economy, when combined with the recent trend in India's political economy, officially described as 'liberalisation', and a more

relaxed regime of economic controls and regulations, has given an added fillip and momentum to the growth of the black economy.

Among the various exercises undertaken to estimate the size and dimension of the parallel economy, the latest is by D.K. Rangnekar and is easily the most informative. For one thing, it is an extension of Rangnekar's earlier estimate made in his note of Dissent to the Report of the Wanchoo Panel, which put the size of this sector in 1965-66 at Rs. 2350 crores and Rs. 3080 crores for 1969-70. Using the same methodology, Rangnekar has produced the following series:

(1) 1973-74	Rs. 5,801	crores.
(2) 1974-75	Rs. 6,422	"
(3) 1975-76	Rs. 7,366	"
(4) 1976-77	Rs. 9,016	"
(5) 1977-78	Rs. 10,855	"
(6) 1978-79	Rs. 13,145	"
(7) 1979-80	Rs. 15,432	"
(8) 1980-81	Rs. 18,241	"

(Business Standard,
30 November, 1982)

On the basis of these figures, it is concluded that, 'it would, thus, seem that almost one-half of the official income is today produced in the concealed or underground sector.' He further goes on to say that, 'the gains from the "Green Revolution" have mainly gone to big farmers and of industrialisation to a "black" elite.' This three to four times increase in the size of the black economy is the locus of all the developments in the political economy of India; quibbling over figures is the most insignificant part of the phenomenon. After all, the nature of the phenomenon, as well as the complex organisational and functional structure of the Indian economy, along with the size, diversity and complexity of our economic regulations and tax laws, matched only by the 'ingenuity' of the tax evaders and black 'elites', make it a nightmarish task to 'estimate' or 'quantify' the black economy.

Notwithstanding the professional obsession with the magnitude of the black economy, the debate certainly does not range over its menacing character. If quantification can do



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no better than substantiate the criticality of the black operations, the effort is tantamount to banging away at already open doors. How far such efforts serve the purpose of moving expert resources away from more relevant enquiries in this field, can only be a matter of surmise.

What may indeed be significant from recent trends can perhaps be gleaned by turning one's attention to some public interventions connected with the parallel economy. After a relatively long period of waiting and watching, the year 1981 saw a powerful and bold initiative to come to terms with the black economy. Ignoring explicit expert opinion and solidly turning one's face away from 'economic' logic, the Special Bearer Bond scheme for transferring temporary usufruct over hoards of black incomes and savings (floating in the form of cash balances) to the Union government was launched. Undaunted by the initial cold reception, it was revived for another term. It not only gave a total amnesty for all the economic and other offences perpetrated in order to amass such cash balances, but offered some overt cash incentives as well.

Without once again going into the well orchestrated criticism of what a famous Parliamentarian called this 'Black Deal with Black Money' which, in effect, equipped the black sector with its own special black currency, let us ask some questions about its impact on reducing the size of the existing black economy as well as its future growth or otherwise. The exercise by Rangnekar, referred to earlier, showed that the compound rate of growth of the black economy at current prices over nearly the whole of the last decade was in the neighbourhood of 18 per cent per annum. According to my estimates (*op. cit.*, p. 107), non-corporate evaded tax revenue in the year 1978-79 was likely to have exceeded Rs. 5,300 crores. Not all this income remains in the form of hard cash; the black sector also draws upon the cash available with the legitimate economy. However, what the Special Bearer Bonds could transfer to public control for a period of ten years

for being bleached 'white', hardly touched the fringe.

Without impounding a sizeable part of the black incomes, assets and cash, no reason exists for expecting a reduction in the scale of black operations. After all, it is simple tax-evaded black incomes which through the generation of compound black incomes create the overarching black economy. Insofar as the terms of this deal were uniquely favourable to all those who indulged in black operations, and amounted to the relative penalisation of those who foolishly or sheepishly paid all their taxes — income tax, wealth-tax, sales-tax, excise and customs duties and octroi, etc. — it certainly did not in any way weaken the incentive to participate in the black economy.

The Bonds scheme itself is proof that the costs of not reporting, of violating laws in order to make pecuniary gain, have not gone up. As for the general ethos, the atmosphere is full of stories of unprecedented levels of corruption. Inflation, smuggling and leakage of foreign exchange, increased production of non-essential goods with declining per capita production of mass consumption goods, speculative price increases and rising urban land and house values, alongwith rising costs not only of elections but day-to-day conduct of politics, all indicate growing lumpenisation of the system. To describe the phenomenon as indicative of a sick society misses the point insofar as it does not refer to the new 'normal' *modus operandi* of the system, which is what the intertwining of the black economy with the official economy represents.

The rising magnitude of public spending representing about 30 per cent of the GNP provides ever new opportunities for developing areas of mutual accommodation between the political-administrative apparatus and business. Cuts, kick-backs, commissions and regular payments in various forms are involved in the disbursement of public funds; so much so that even the pattern of public spending is determined by, among other things, maximising the fall-out. This refers to spending

both within and outside the country. The Kuo oil deal may not be so very atypical after all.

Accrual of such vast incomes to a new kind of entrepreneurs (an entrepreneurship in reverse; if the socio-economic innovative role for development is the desideratum) who have extensive links with the political and administrative personnel, creates new depositories of socio-economic power. The increasing inability of the State to become impersonal is related to the increasing privatisation of the State, economy and society. What appears as corruption and black incomes to the rest of society is some kind of a natural process to those who view the State and the economy as personal estates.

Under such a dispensation the political-administrative black incomes start finding their way into open and clandestine investments in trade, industry, real estate and finance, both within and outside the country. Thus, over and above smuggling and over and under-invoicing develop as new avenues for the leakage of foreign exchange. Increasing resort to external borrowing and import-liberalisation seem unlikely to be unrelated to these newer trends in the network of the black sector's links.

Many socio-economic explanations attempting to make sense out of the intensification of India's fundamental crisis (developing mal-development on top of persistent underdevelopment) failed to come to grips with the unfolding reality since the mid-sixties. This is certainly related to the inadequate and inappropriate specification of the framework — some sort of text-book market economy in a post-colonial setting. The model which might approximate to the Indian reality has to be based on an explicit recognition that a late twentieth century capitalism, denied many of the options and privileges enjoyed by its predecessors in the developed North, has to evolve new mechanisms like those represented by the black economy. 'Magendo' in Uganda and 'Kalabule' in Ghana are nothing but the cousins of the Number Two economy in India.

Thus, what Rosa Luxemburg said of the capitalism of her time is certainly true for countries like India: 'Sweating blood and filth with every pore from head to toe characterises not only the birth of capital but also its progress in the world at every step.'

It is in this framework that one has to view the on-going controversies concerning controls, licensing and the role of the public sector. That an increasing role of the State in the economy by itself can provide all one's answers under the present circumstances, has probably been proved wrong by now. However, whether the role be direct, indirect or through various other instrumentalities are also questions which have not been clearly articulated. The direct, physical controls have not worked and neither has the indirect, price-mechanism-based regulation of the economy. Food, cement, sugar, paper, steel, etc., are many cases where the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. But this has not resulted either in the disappearance of adhocism or ineffectiveness, nor could these branches of the economy be restored to healthy functioning.

In 1982, a major decision was taken to decontrol cement. Huge premia, which traders and politicians pocketed in the process, stand largely transferred to the industry, though it would be naive to presume that the middlemen are totally out in the cold. But the decision-making about levy cement pricing and permission to operate collusive pricing with a handful of cement manufacturers, which the latter admit has given them a windfall of hundreds of crores of rupees, cannot be considered as a reversal of past trends. In any case, the cheap and plentiful supply of cement under the competitive rules of the game remains a far cry. From the point of view of the black economy, inordinately high rates of return are permitted. This move bridges to an extent the great chasm separating the rather high rates of return in cement from the generally permitted rates by raising the latter. But since such high rates of return have not been conceded in most other industries, the law of the average rate of profit creates ad-

ditional pressures for further generation and proliferation of black incomes in the other branches of the economy.

The case of cement is a significant pointer to many facets of the distortions caused by the black economy. The demand for cement and similar critical intermediate inputs, including power, not only is pushed up sizeably but is also pulled in specific directions by the pattern of black spending and investment. This creates a double distortion. One, the growth in the intermediate goods output gets divorced from development potential (unless, of course, one is blindly identifying growth with growth of output). Second, increasingly, the investible resources, both in public and private sectors, move away from goods of mass consumption.

The distortion of the demand pattern does not remain confined to the private sector. In 1982, public spending on the Asiad extravaganza provided a dramatic instance of the erosion of the values of austerity and any sense of priorities. The forbidding cost of promoting what is called 'national pride' and 'sportsmanship' was swept aside in the calculations of a political elite so closely identified with the new-rich now catapulted into positions of power because of the black economy's involvement with competitive electoral politics. When compulsory primary education remains a distant dream, with over 50 per cent of more than 4 lakh odd primary schools still without roof and four walls, the splendour and publicity and kickback seeking politicians found the courage to expend something like Rs. 1,000 crores for this great 'national undertaking'. The dictum 'when you cannot give food to the people, give them circuses' seems to have caught the imagination of many, whose popular appeal is based largely on a politics fed and sustained by black money.

The impact of such goings on in planning cannot be missed. The gap between Plan targets and actual achievement owes itself, among other things, to the cost over-runs, delays, defective materials, shortages, leakages of foreign exchange,

weakening of monetary discipline etc., brought about by the operation of the black economy. At a more basic, overall economy level, the ability of the Plan to modify and discipline the elemental market forces is reduced because the latter operate on the basis of powerful backing of the parallel economy. Instead of the Plan imposing a social design on the market processes, it seems to be the other way around and this may well be a factor of some significance in reducing planning to a rather jejune existence.

By the sheer logic of its size and sweep, the black economy could not have left the public sector immune to its influence. Apart from the high level leakages in granting of contracts, the rot has percolated to almost every level — like collection of con-money from unemployed youth and conscious overstaffing to maximise such gains. The public sector remains but an image of the regime, which has brought it into existence; this has been demonstrated time and again in history. The present impasse of the public sector also has something to do with its confinement largely to the role of providing infrastructural props to the pillars of the parallel economy, together with the loss of its countervailing role. However, the stranglehold of the parallel economy cannot be reduced, at least in the short-run, merely by a change of regime and the severing of its links with the black economy. To the extent that the depredations of the parallel economy beyond a point become unpalatable to the powers that be, the tactical line for evolving a policy package against the black sector involves using the few openings left by the absence of a thorough-going and consistent mutuality of interests among its various components in politics and the economy. In this process, a redefinition of the planning process, priorities and newer roles for the public sector can provide the initial base on which the edifice of the counteracting forces against the parallel economy can be erected. The year 1982, however, is coming to a close with hardly any evidence of an appropriate cognition of the issues involved, let alone the question of any operational stirring towards these ends.

Even modest measures may help

MANU R. SHROFF

THE term 'Parallel Economy' is a misnomer. Black money and all that goes with it are no longer parallel to the mainstream of the economy but are part and parcel of it. So much so that in some sectors of the economy it is the black transactions which dominate the scene. Much has been said about the causes of the 'underground' economy, and its consequences; little about how to deal with it, if fundamental changes in the economic system are ruled out.

Black money owes its origin to the evasion of tax laws and regulations such as price controls, import restrictions, rent control and so on. But even in an economy free of government regulation, there will be scope for generation of black money through the breach of non-economic regulations, and the bribery associated with it. Any flow of income which is not disclosed to the relevant authorities when there is an obligation to disclose represents black money; any payment which is

contrary to law also represents black money. A bribe for escaping, say, a criminal liability, would represent black money in the hands of the recipient as he obviously cannot disclose it. If the recipient has income below the exemption limit for income-tax, he does not violate the income tax law; but he commits a crime by accepting a bribe and the proceeds do not cease to be black merely because they are 'not unaccounted' for under the tax laws. Thus, laissez-faire is not a complete answer to the problem; 'Ram Rajya' would be!

Although economic regulation is thus not a necessary condition for black money, it is clear that the black economy thrives mainly under regimes which are interlaced with such regulation. The more complex the controls, the greater is the sophistication in breaking them and hence the larger the pay-off. No respectable economist will consider it worth his while to address the problem of 'black money' arising from

petty corruption at the Taluka or the village level, since there is little sophistication in it and the purely 'economic' effects of such corruption, as distinct from the erosion of the social fabric it causes, are not of great consequence. The focus is thus on big black money, the city smuggler, the business and the professional tax evaders, the real estate operators, the politicians who thrive on the system.

Clearly, black money distorts. More, it destroys societies. The economist who mourns the non-neutrality of the fiscal, monetary and other regulatory devices finds that money generated by these devices, in turn, makes it even more difficult for the regulations to achieve their original purpose.

Tax evasion means that the effective rate of tax is to that extent reduced, not by the sanction of society, but by the uncontrolled activities of those who break the tax laws with impunity. The consequences for the economy are not difficult to see. If government expenditures are assumed to be fixed, tax evasion causes an equivalent increase in budgetary deficit and the consequences for the economy would then depend on the way the deficit is met: by a further increase in tax rates in an attempt to collect more (which often ends up in greater tax evasion, but also a greater penalty on the honest tax payer); greater dependence on foreign financing; or, simply, a further dose of inflationary deficit financing.

The consequences are, however, not the same as would be the case if the effective tax rates were low enough initially to have caused no incentive for tax evasion. In the latter case the extra incomes in private hands would be legal. When the effective tax rate is forced down by evasion, it generates black incomes which also tend to follow a different pattern of disposal: greater propensity to consume and to spend on luxuries, and somewhat greater propensity to invest in assets which do not readily require disclosure. Black incomes tend thus to depress the saving rate and distort the national priorities by diverting re-

sources to unproductive consumption and investment.

Black transactions also 'wrest' from the system greater play of market forces than the authorities intend. There are markets which are recognized to be dual markets, e.g., sugar, cement. Black operators are not content with such a limited role for the 'invisible hand'. In all markets where there is control and regulation, a duality is enforced by these operators who are not initiated in the virtues of the market system but seem to do the job more effectively than the 'Boston Brahmins'.

The result is that rationing by 'price' is enforced in practice despite the severe inequalities in the distribution of income and contrary to the intentions of society; and there are none of the advantages of the market system in the sense of a larger investment in response to scarcity to relieve such scarcity. The profits are an 'undisclosed' windfall accruing quite often to the middlemen who tend to spend them much the same way as tax evaders do their illegitimate gains — in luxurious living, real-estate or gold.

The distortions are not confined to 'high living'. Any opportunity that presents itself at a given time to multiply black gains is seized upon. Black money seems to descend with special vigour on all markets which display scarcity. If credit restrictions are placed on financing stocks of groundnut oil, black money rushes in as an old faithful. Speculative activity gets a boost as well as financial backing; so does smuggling. One breach of rule releases resources with which one can go on breaking a whole chain of rules and augment the resources on the way. Soon black becomes the very way of life for a growing number of transactors. Those who do not participate in the system are not merely left out of the gains of the system; they often cannot legitimately enter into transactions in certain markets unless they are prepared to play the game according to the rules set by the operators — or rather by the market since, by then, the 'black ratio' is an equilibrium settled by market forces.

Over time, however, the distortions caused by the consumption pattern of the 'black rich' get official blessing. In the name of tourism or foreign exchange earning, a whole lot of investment is directed towards meeting the demand created by the black incomes. Those in power legitimise the system in a number of ways: by their dependence on it for political funds; by their participation in the same way of life (five-star and all that); by reorienting public priorities; and by periodically granting amnesty for the initial crime.

As the size of the black economy grows, the area of regulation gets progressively restricted. Estimates of the black economy vary from 6 to 49 per cent of the GNP. The estimate of close to 50 per cent is regarded by many as being on the high side, specially considering that black incomes tend to be a predominantly urban phenomenon. Aggregate ratios of this kind are less useful than estimates of the extent of undisclosed incomes and wealth in specific sectors. For instance, it is the generally observed fact that black transactions predominate in the real estate market. Thus, remedial action could be designed with specific 'high black profile' sectors in view.

The recent discussions concerning distinctions between black money and black wealth and the definitions or measure of the black economy are interesting, but not conclusive in terms of action. One has to act on as many fronts as possible and must concentrate on specific sectors in order to make a deep impression on them. This can then have a snowballing effect on other sectors.

Take, for instance, the real-estate market. Urban land is scarce; but the supply not inelastic. The city grows, enveloping the agricultural land surrounding it (or reclaiming the seas). Government (and hence the politician) has a big stake in regulating the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural land. Even the supply of existing urban land can be choked through the imposition of ceilings which can be relaxed at will on payment of 'on' money. Politicians cannot

accept white money; so the real-estate operators have to organize themselves on a 60:40 or similar basis. They themselves wish to avoid stamp duties; income tax; capital gains tax; wealth tax. The tenant wants to save the property tax; the landlord the income tax; the petty official wants his cut. The 'city fathers', the aldermen of yore, have no interest in collecting revenue for civic amenities. They are all, without exception, propertied gentlemen. There could be hardly any area of activity in which such a tacit agreement to break laws obtains almost effortlessly.

Inflation erodes the value of the middle class savings. Thus even the relatively less well-to-do join the fray: land prices are booming; let us grab a plot. But then how to find the black money? There are enough advisers who tell you how you can convert white into black. The big-wigs have a problem of laundering; the small ones must learn how to dirty their hands.

It is natural for black incomes earned elsewhere in the system to seek investment in urban land and property in view of the high expectation of appreciation. Even black wealth must be protected against erosion of value by inflation! The expectation of appreciation reflects, however, the basic underlying scarcity of land in relation to growing demand. Speculative demand for land originates both from black incomes and from a legitimate desire of the middle classes to acquire an asset which protects the value of their savings. If they had available an asset which reasonably protected the value of their savings, a considerable part of the demand for urban land and property could be diverted to such an asset. And if taxation of capital gains is made more sensible, it could take some of the heat (and blackness) off the real-estate market.

Instead of giving an amnesty from time to time to tax evaders through voluntary disclosure schemes, taxation of capital gains could be 'reduced'. In 1977, a measure was introduced under which there was no capital gains tax if proceeds of the sale of an asset (including real-estate) were invested

in specified assets for a specified period — e.g., bank deposits, Unit Trust, etc. There was no need for a seller of a flat in Bombay to hide his proceeds, and incur the risk and inconvenience of a black deal. And resources which got locked up into bidding up prices of one type of asset got released for wider use, through the intermediation of banks and the Unit Trust, in other worthwhile investments. There was no reason to have given up the 1977 measure. The diluted version which offers exemption if proceeds are invested in 7½% Rural Bonds (introduced by Charan Singh) has not had a comparable effect in curbing speculation and making investible resources more mobile.

The rush for the DDA self-financing scheme or similar schemes elsewhere will no longer be there if government were to offer an indexed bond (with an appropriate ceiling on individual holding) which would guarantee the real value of the investment and offer a small return. Real-estate prices may be expected to rise faster than the general level of prices and the bond which provides protection against the general price rise may not be a substitute for a plot of land. But, allowing for the risk element, the cost of maintaining real property and of dealing with law there, would still be a significant appeal of the indexed bond, and this, in itself, may contribute to a reduction in the divergence between the trend in real-estate prices and the general price level.

It is often argued by government officials that an indexed bond would imply a public declaration by government of its inability to control inflation. This, however, need not be so: at least, not any more than that the introduction of the so-called black bonds was a public declaration of government's inability to control black money! Indeed, an indexed bond would be an incentive for government to pursue anti-inflationary policies since, to the extent they succeeded in controlling inflation, they would have reduced the cost of their borrowing through the indexed security.

These are the kinds of 'small' measures that need to be taken. They will not eliminate black money; but they will soften the crucial markets.

Objection: why succumb to them? If you remove the capital gains tax, obviously there will be no need to evade it through illegal means. Why not remove income-tax, the wealth and gift tax, the whole lot? A plausible objection; but not formidable. There is less surrender in exempting capital gains in the way suggested above than in the tax amnesties which have been given more than once. And no claim is made that a 'dent' in the real-estate market will remove all black money; only that a crucial market will be softened. Because of the Rent Control Acts and the protection of the tenant provided under them, no one looks upon real-estate as an asset for earning income; it is primarily a vehicle for capital gains. And the wealth tax is not so significant since it is payable on the cost of property valued originally and not on market value after appreciation. Stamp duties are an incentive for black deals, but they are only incidentally so. The crucial tax is the capital gains tax and if that is remitted under suitable conditions, a major incentive for black transactions in a market like real-estate will disappear.

If, at the same time, Rent Control Acts are amended so as to remove or dilute the protection given to tenants with rents above a certain limit, there would be a considerable improvement in the supply of housing in the 'rental' market and a more appropriate relationship would be established between property values and rentals, relieving the pressure on the property markets.

No great harm can come to government by the introduction of the two measures: exemption from capital gains if proceeds are invested in a wide variety of not so illiquid monetary assets and offer of an indexed bond. And there is a clear prospect of gain. It is important that these measures, if introduced, are kept stable for a while to test their success.

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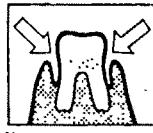
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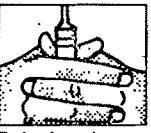
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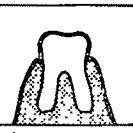
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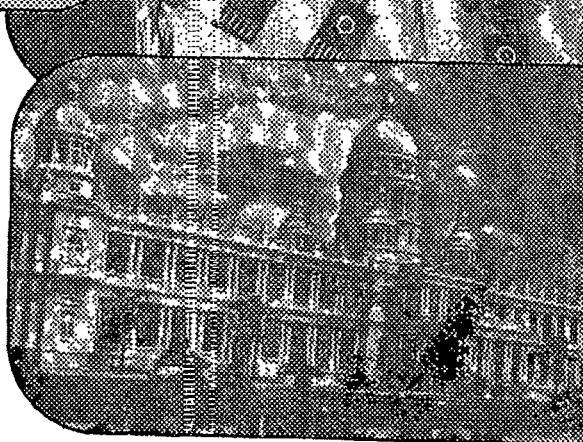
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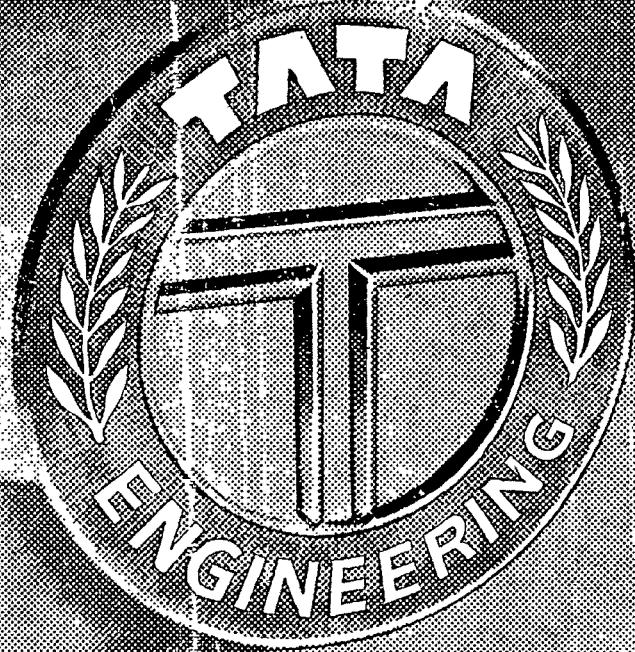
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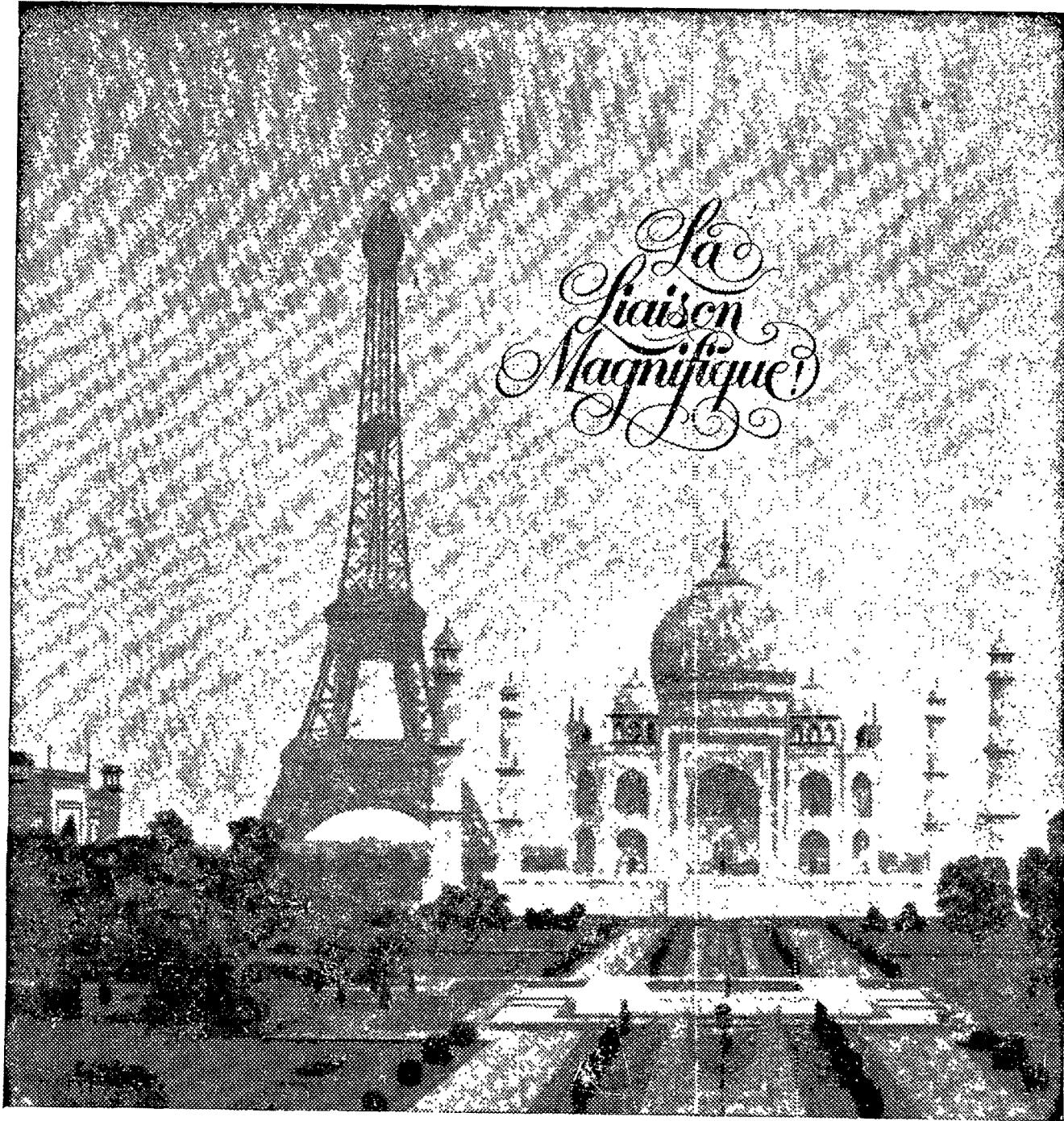
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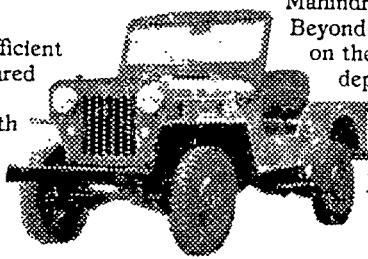


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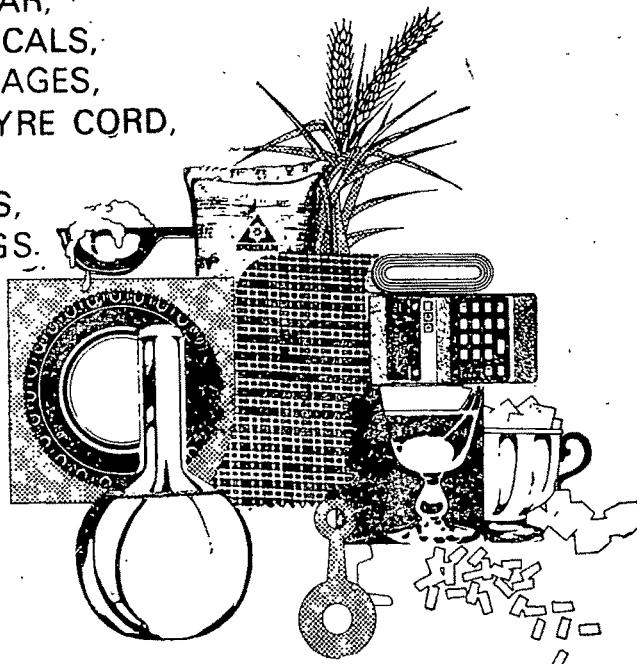
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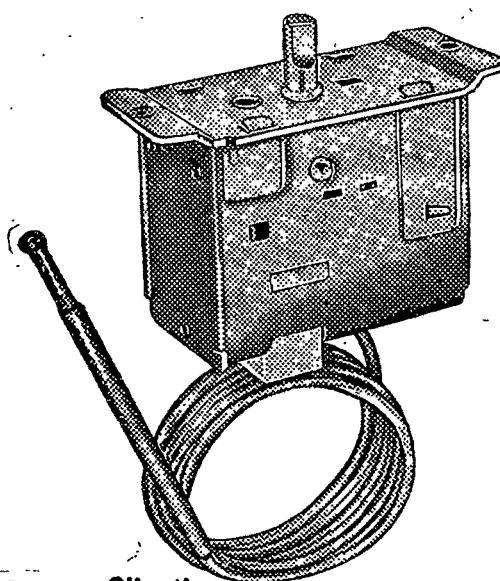
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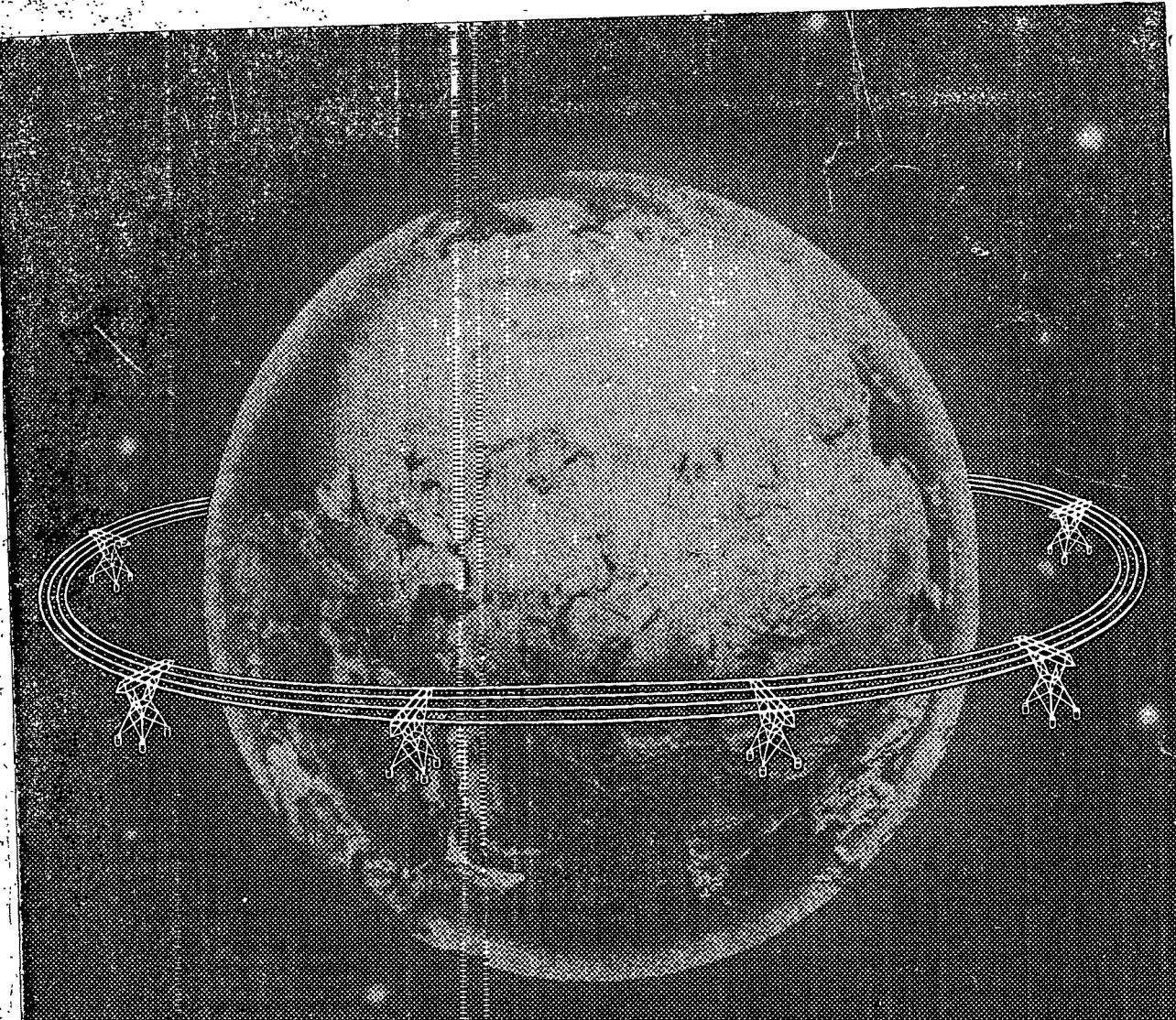


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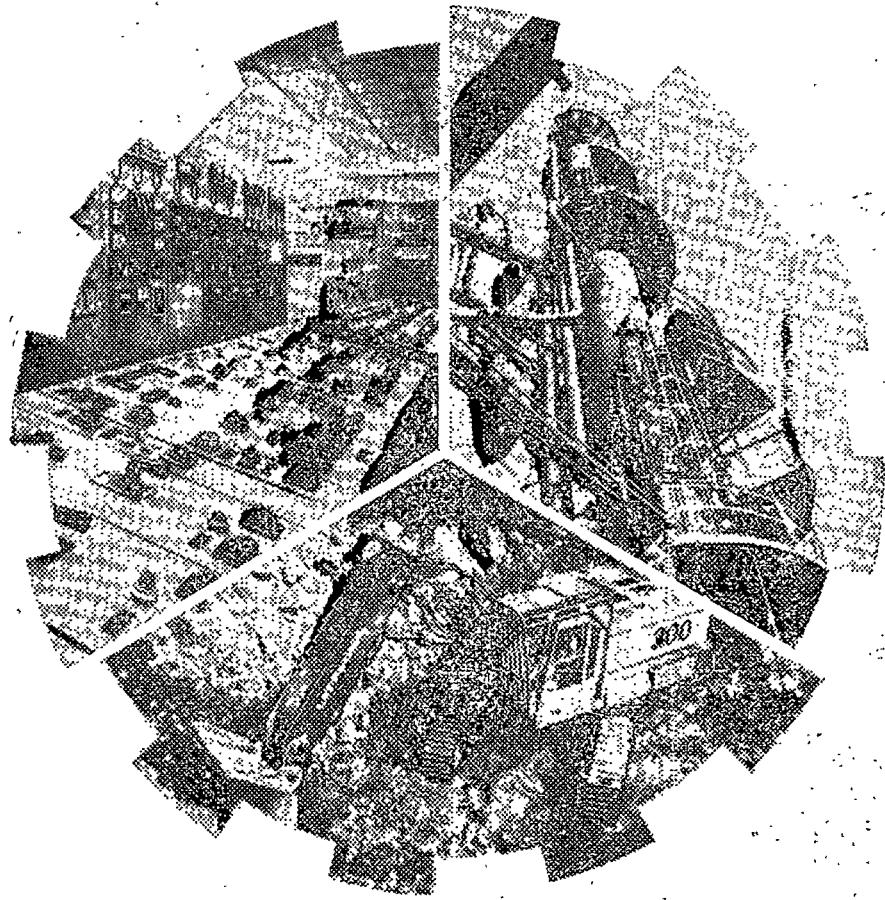
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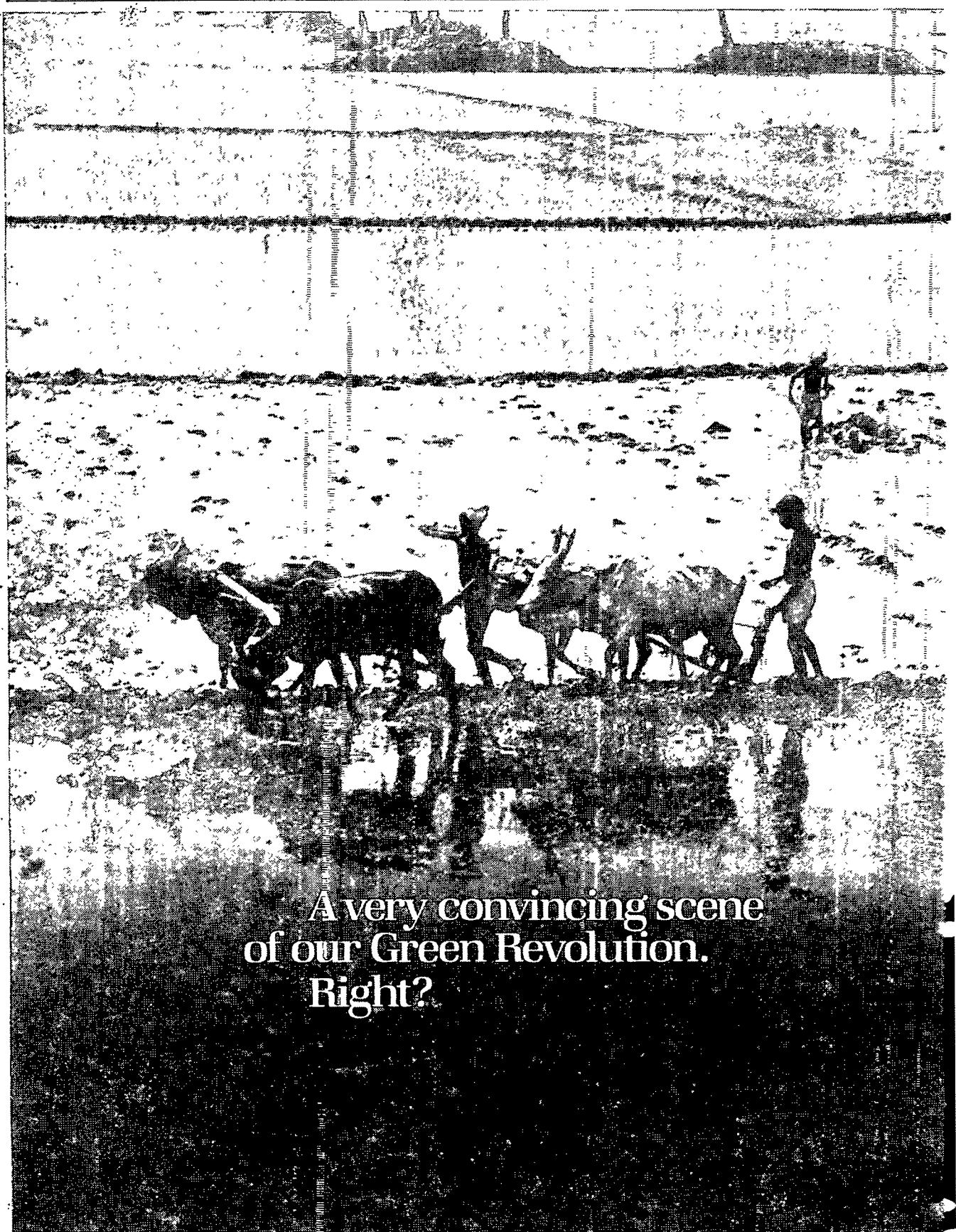
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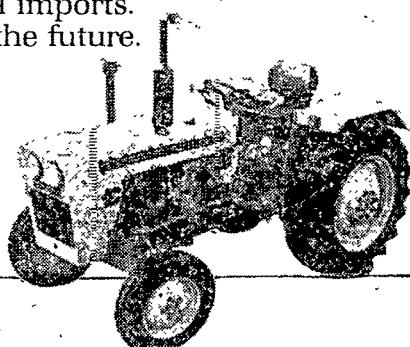
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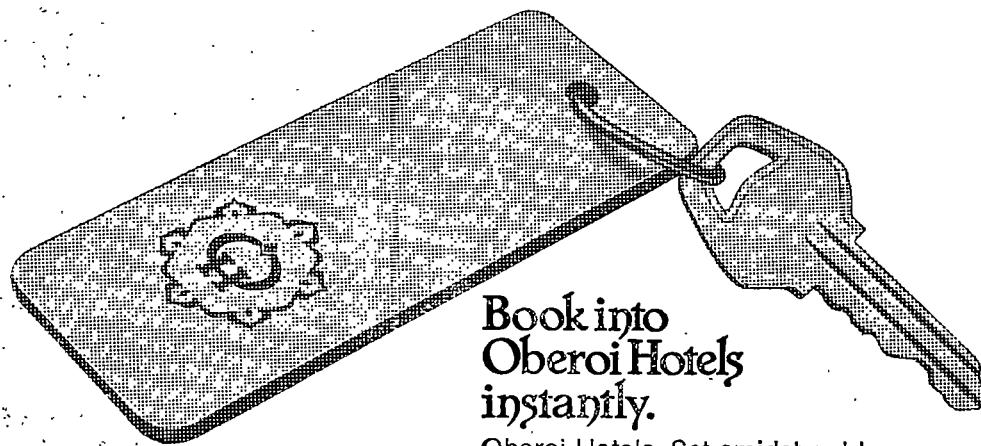
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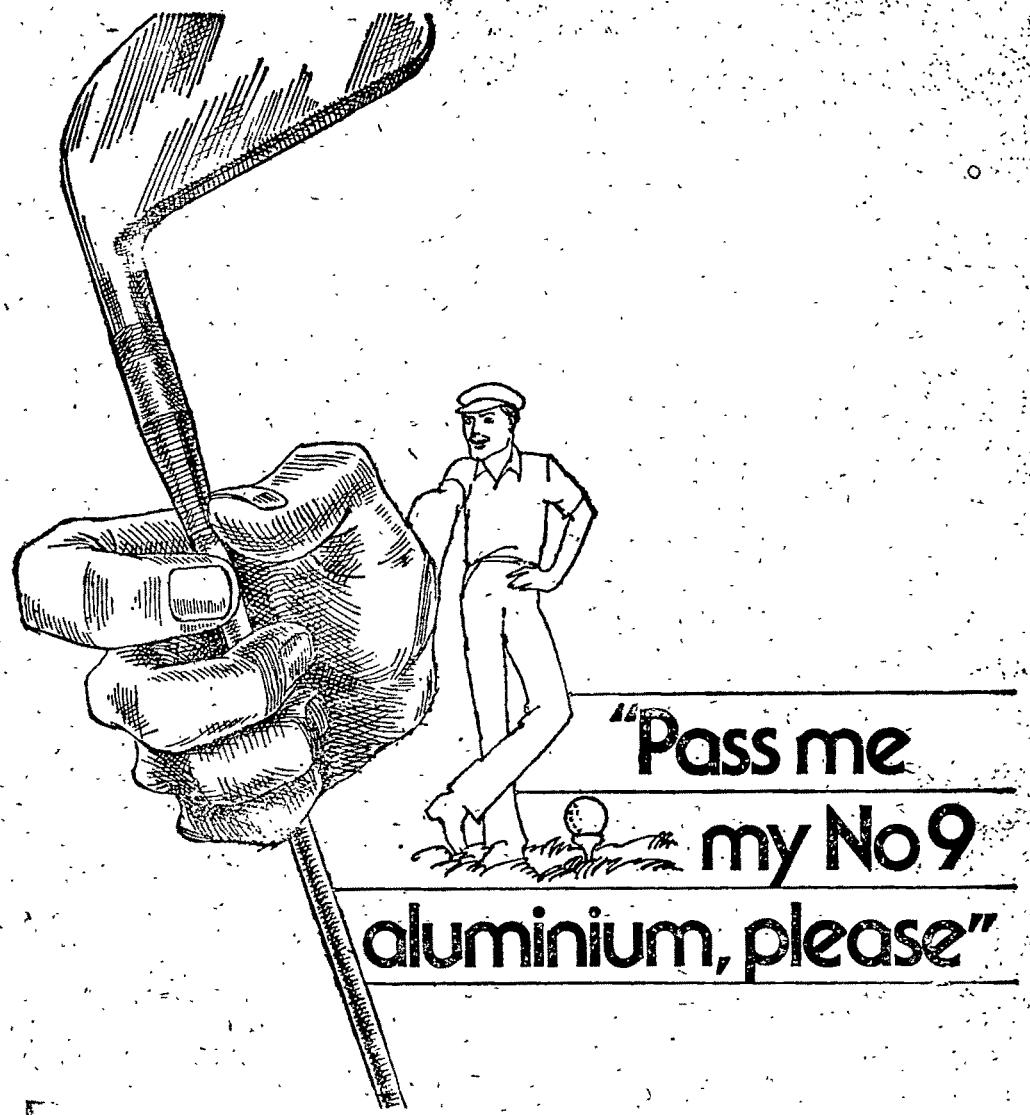
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NEXT MONTH: BREAKDOWN

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a symposium on
problems within and
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The problem

STRANGELY, whereas to revive means to gain new vigour and life, the moment you add 'ism' to it, the concept transforms into its exact opposite. Revivalism drags you down with the weight of all its antiquated thought although its outward face reveals, for a while, a contemporary resurgence.

All over the world there seems to be a desperate attempt by people to make up for the loss of quality in their lives. The past is then measured in mythical terms to satisfy the need for self assurance. In the process, that self seems to grow enormously, cutting out all others, exclusive, looking inwards, seeking refuge and comfort for its own inadequacies, complexes, problems, in the thought of a past that once held glory, in revivalism.

The third world — the developing, the underdeveloped, call it what you will — has perhaps a larger need to be assured. The future appears bleak, the distance between itself and the 'developed' grows longer by the minute, even as the means to cover that distance have advanced at great technological speed. Since you can't build your self-image or pride on the material horizon which is beyond your reach, and since the contemporary 'isms' fail to assure you in any sense, you look backwards into the tortuous labyrinths of the past, clutch-

ing on to all the little totems on the way, the do's and don'ts which demarcate your identity from others.

How else can one explain the distressing scene which exists in India today between the communities. Our secularism stands in tatters, though thankfully it hasn't yet fallen off the body politic. Somehow, we seemed to have used the wrong thread. Integration was a non-concept, a non-starter; it could only mean merging with the majority. What was required was a healthy respect for difference, difference in religion, in culture, in dress, in speech. This respect for things and beliefs other than your own had to be engendered with sensitive care from childhood onwards, proclaimed as our many-hued splendour. But these are wild exhortations, particularly in the climate of today when ethics is a dirty word, when nothing is respected except money and the authority it can buy, when every leadership exploits the most personal beliefs for political advantage. To touch this festering scene with a bit of civilisation would mean, first of all, the creation of inhibition within ourselves, of restraint, and then a little understanding of others, of their faiths, their need for self-assurance and assertion, for the recognition of identity.

This issue of Seminar is an attempt towards that end, towards that touch of civilisation.

Hindu renaissance

KARAN SINGH

THE secret of the persistence of Hinduism, its dynamics for many thousands of years from the very dawn of our civilization, lies in its capacity for renewal and renaissance. At the time Hinduism was born, a number of other great world religions also flourished; there was the Egyptian religion, a very highly sophisticated and developed religion, there was Mesopotamia, there was the Mithrite cult in Crete, there were the Central American and South American civilizations. But they have all disappeared; they are no longer living faiths: You can go to Egypt, you can see the pyramids and the sphinx, you can marvel at the glory and creativity of that civilization, but it is not alive any longer. It is something that lives only in museums or in the minds of research scholars. But Hinduism retains its dynamism, retains its links with the past and retains the capacity for regeneration. This is because it has within it this capacity for reinterpretation from age to age, and it has constantly produced great men and women who by the force of their spiritual achievements have brought about this renaissance, this re-integration.

The whole history of Hinduism, from the Vedic period down to our

own century with Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramana Maharshi, can be looked upon as a constant series of renewals based upon certain fundamental precepts. After the Vedic age there was the age of the great reformers, Lord Mahavira and Lord Buddha, who were from within the Hindu tradition but who brought new elements of social reform and of social dynamics into the system. You come later to the great South Indian Acharyas, to Acharya Sankara, to Ramanujacharya, to Madhwacharya. Then in the so called medieval age there was the great Bhakti movement that arose in all parts of India. Yogen Lalleswari in Kashmir, Mirabai, Kabir, Guru Nanak Dev, Tulasidas, Surdas, Purandaradasa, Shankar Dev, all over India, in different languages, in different mother tongues, these great singers spoke of the eternal message of Hinduism.

Similarly, you come down to the great reformers in the middle of the 19th century which is often called the beginning of the new Indian renaissance. In fact, our freedom movement itself flowed from the reform movement. In Bengal, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj, Devendra Nath Thakur founded the Adi Brahma

Samaj, Keshab Chandra Sen founded the Brahmo Samaj of India. In Maharashtra, R.K. Bhandarkar and M.G. Ranade founded the Prarthana Samaj. In the Punjab, Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj. Then you had great figures like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo who by dint of their tremendous spiritual achievements were able to bring about a restatement and a reintegration of Hinduism.

Now, over eighty per cent of Indians being Hindus, it is self-evident that unless there is a dynamic renaissance in Hinduism we cannot really optimize the creativity of the Indian nation. I do not want the Hindu renaissance to be looked upon only as a reaction to something that may happen in the field of conversions. Even if Islam did not exist, even if there was not a single Muslim in India, the Hindu renaissance would be necessary.

This is an important preliminary point because, living as we are in North India, there is always a tendency to be in a sort of a reactive frame of mind and simply to move when we find that something is happening with the Muslims. In fact, the new stirring in Hinduism represents an autonomous development within a great world religion. Certainly, in the same way as the Christian impact helped to trigger off the social reform movements in the 19th century, it could well be that Muslim fundamentalism helps to trigger off a creative movement in the 20th century. But it is an autonomous movement necessary within the framework of Hinduism itself.

The new dynamism, however, cannot be brought about simply by laws. We have put secularism in the Constitution, and we have passed a lot of laws. But it is in the minds of men and women that the battle has to be fought. Unless our concepts and our attitudes change, unless there is a new impetus, we will not really be able to break out of the paradox in which we find ourselves today.

A nation built upon the great Vedic utterance, *Satyam eva jayate*

— (*Satyam eva jayate, naanrtam, satyena panthka vitato devayanah, yenakramantrsayo hyaptakama, yatra tat satyasya paramani nidhanam* from the *Mundakopanishad*) is sinking in an ocean of corruption. Are eighty per cent of Indians not Hindus, and if there is corruption today, can the Hindu community say it does not bear at least eighty per cent of the responsibility? It is very easy to look for scapegoats, but the problem is that we have to reintegrate our own culture, the truths enshrined in our own tradition and then only can we expect a real breakthrough.

Indeed, if a Hindu renaissance is necessary because of Hinduism being one of the great world religions, then all religions today have to go through a similar process. I would like to see an Islamic renaissance, a Christian renaissance, a Buddhist renaissance. I use the word 'renaissance,' not 'revival'. This is an important distinction. A revival would simply be trying to go back to the past. It would be a Hindu revival if one were to, say, scrap the Constitution, reintroduce the *Manu Smriti* and the old laws and go back to two thousand five hundred years. This is not what we are trying to do. We are moving rapidly into the 21st century, into the nuclear age. If our religion is to have any validity in the next century it has got to be capable of dealing with the new truths of science and technology. We are reaching out into the planets now and now to the stars. Mankind has broken away from the confines of this earth and we need a philosophy which can parallel those achievements.

Mankind is at a crucial crossroads in its long and tortuous history of this planet. Science and technology have given us tremendous power. We are now in the space age, in the field of medicine, communications, cybernetics, in every field there is a tremendous growth. And yet that same science and technology has given us nuclear weapons which today can destroy not only the human race but all life on this planet.

There is a dangerous divergence between knowledge and wisdom.

Old values are collapsing and the new is not born, and we find ourselves precariously poised between the past and the future. Like Tri-sanku, we are neither in the heaven nor on the earth. We neither have the dynamism of our ancient culture nor have we really been able to integrate the new scientific and technological developments into our consciousness.

As a result there is a neurotic situation, not only in India. In fact, in India we are probably in some ways more fortunate than in the West or in other religious traditions where it is virtually impossible to be both deeply religious and to come to terms with the nuclear age. But Hinduism does have the capacity to come to terms with the nuclear age, perhaps even to bring about a new synthesis which could be of advantage not only to Hindus but to the entire human race. And for this we must explore some of the basic concepts that are built into our structure and that, to my mind, constitutes the essentials of Hinduism which have to be recaptured and rediscovered.

I go back to the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, obviously, because that is the glowing and dynamic source of our cultural heritage. Take, for example, the concept that everywhere it is the same dynamic force; the same *Shakti*; the same energy that is prevalent: *Isa vasyam idam sarvam yatkincha jagtyam jagat*. This is the first line of the *Isavasya Upanishad*, and I think it was Gandhiji who said that if everything else was destroyed in Hinduism and this one *mantra* remained it would be enough to recreate Hinduism.

Whatever exists, not only on this tiny speck of dust that we call the earth but in the millions and millions of galaxies, wherever there is existence, is the manifestation of the same Divine Force. That is the basic concept. Only recently, fifty years ago, after Einstein and quantum mechanics, has the dichotomy between matter and energy been breached in the West, and only now are they beginning to realize that these are interchangeable terms that in fact there is only one energy.

one power, one shakti that pervades the entire existence. And our seers have brought this as one of the basic postulates of Hinduism.

Then, based on that, there is a remarkable concept of mankind as a family: *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. When you enter Parliament House by the first gate, upon it is written:

*Ayam nija paro vetti gananam
laghu chetasam,
udara charitanam tu Vasudhaiva
Kutumbakam.*

'This is mine, this is yours; that is the thinking of people with small minds; For ones with the greater consciousness the whole world is a family.'

Thousands of years ago, when it was not possible to travel more than a few miles a day, our seers had this intuitive vision of the world as a family. Today science and technology have brought this about. You can travel so rapidly that you can go right round the world and come back the same day. Today we are being knit together by technology, but our consciousness is stuck in the old grooves. That is why the danger has arisen to the human race, and that is why we have got to recreate this concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, the world as a family which is central to Hinduism:

Then there is the great verse of the *Gita*: *Ishvarah sarvabhootanam hrddeshe arjuna tishthathi*. 'The Lord abides in the heart of every being.' Not only in the heart of the Hindu. We do not believe, as some other religious traditions believe, that we are the only ones who are chosen and the others are doomed. We believe instead that in every human being, regardless of his race, his language, his religion, his caste, his sex, his political background, the divine resides. This again is one of those fundamental concepts at the heart of Hinduism which gives it such power and vitality.

We have the great utterance of the *Rig Veda*: *ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*—The Truth is one, the wise may call it by many names. I claim that we are the only

religion in the world that accepts other religions as goals to the Divine. We do not claim a monopoly of wisdom. Naturally, we will not and should not allow ourselves to be pushed around by other religions. But we have this belief in our Shastras that all genuine spiritual striving ultimately leads to the goal. Sri Krishna says quite clearly in the *Gita* that though people may strive in their different ways, they come to him. This has been the fundamental Hindu approach, and it is only in the face of aggressive proselytizing by other religions that Hinduism also developed certain similar defensive mechanisms.

Then, the *Rig Veda* has a marvellous sentence, a marvellous mantra defining the goal of human life as *atmano mokshar�ham jagat hitaya cha* — the salvation of our soul and the welfare of the world. Hinduism, for various reasons, began to become more interested in *atmanomoksha*, more interested in individual salvation and forgot the other side of the coin which is *jagat hitaya*—the welfare of society. And this despite the fact that our Shastras teach us *bahu jana sukhaya, bahu jana hitaya cha*, for the welfare of the many, for the well-being of the many, and *sarvepi sukhinassantu, sarve santu niramaya, sarve bhadrani pashyantu, ma kaschit dukhabha bhavet*. 'May everybody be happy, may everybody be free from disease, may everybody see auspicious sights, may no one have to suffer deprivation and sorrow.'

What greater definition can you have of socialism? Even Marx spoke of only one class, but our sages have spoken of the entire community. Our sages have not thrown people against each other on the basis of caste or on the basis of class. They tried to integrate the totality of society so that the welfare of all could be assured. These examples can be continued indefinitely but I have said enough to show that the basic Hindu beliefs based upon the *Vedanta* are enlightened, all-inclusive and extremely relevant to man in his present predicament. What is required is a restatement and reaffirmation of these truths so that narrow-minded, superstitious and undesirable social

customs that have developed in Hinduism over many centuries of servitude can be cleansed. This in fact is what we are trying to do in the Virat Hindu Samaj.

The Virat Hindu Samaj and the great meetings that we have been having is a significant development. We had a meeting in Delhi where lakhs of people came, and I said to them that our *dharma* teaches us to see God in the sky, in the ocean, in the forest, in the mountains, in the rivers, in the stones, why can we not see God in our fellow human being? What sort of a Vedanta is it that discriminates between man and man. I have been born the son of a Maharaja and lived in luxury and richness: my *atma* is not in any way greater than that of a poor Harijan who may never have got a single square meal in all his life. A Minister may be in a very big position but if he is corrupt he is less of a *karma yogi* than a peon who may be doing his job with sincerity and with integrity. This is the basis of our Hindu ethos. How can we accept these ridiculous contradictions between what we believe and what we do?

Everyday we read in the papers that girls are burnt because they do not bring enough dowry. What greater insult could there be to Vedanta? We believe that a woman is the *shakti swaroop*: *ya devi sarva bhooteshu shakti roopena samsthita*. In the Hindu tradition the woman is looked upon not as inferior to man but as his *ardhangini*, as the equal co-sharer with man in the adventure of living. But we can no longer afford the luxury of this divergence between our beliefs and our actions. Some years ago there was this unfortunate incident in Jaipur when the lights went out in the course of a cinema show and a large number of women were molested. When this was reported one of my friends said to me, 'you talk a great deal about Hinduism and the Hindu respect for women. Is it that this respect is only operative when the lights are on? What happens to your Hinduism when the lights go off?'

The point I am making is that we have got to live up to the teachings,

we have got to reinterpret Hinduism and make it into really a universally world religion. This does not mean that we should be apologetic or on the defensive. Over eighty per cent of Indians are Hindus today, and even otherwise we should get a fair deal. We do not ask for any special privileges, but when curious things happen like, for example, the Government of India holidays for 1982 in which you do not have a single Hindu holiday which is compulsory, naturally the Hindus feel upset. Or when there are authoritative reports that massive foreign funds are coming into India for proselytization.

The Hindu renaissance revolves around a reinterpretation of Hinduism to meet the requirements of the nuclear age. India has always been looked upon by its great teachers as the guru of nations. It may be a chauvinistic idea, but this has been said not only in the old days but by people like Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his foreword to my book on Sri Aurobindo says: 'It is significant to note that great political mass movements in India have had a spiritual background behind them.'

Why did Gandhiji start his prayer meetings with Ramdhan? Why did Sri Aurobindo and the great leaders of the radical movement at the turn of the century popularize this mantram of 'Vande Mataram' from the Ananda Math? Because India is a nation that has always nurtured religion, and not only the religions born in India. There is Hinduism and the offshoots of Hinduism — Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. Then there are the religions that came from outside India, when the followers of Zarathustra fled from Persia they came to India and they are flourishing here. The Jews have come to India for two thousand years, there has never been any Diaspora, there has never been any persecution. The Christians came to India a thousand years before they went to Europe, and Islam for the last thousand years has been here.

India is a nation which nurtures religions. There is something in this soil, there is something in the power

of the Himalayas, the great *Devata-tma*. Kalidasa described the Himalayas not only as a mountain but as a divine power—*astiyuttarasyam dishi devatatma, himalayo nama, nagadhiraja*. It is a spiritual presence. If India forgets her spiritual heritage it will become one of many other nations; it will not even remain a single nation. If India is to remain a nation it has got to rediscover and strengthen its spiritual heritage, and in that spiritual heritage, eighty per cent of Indians are Hindus and five per cent of Indians believe in religions which have flowed from Hinduism. It is therefore necessary to have a Hindu renaissance if India is to rediscover the roots of her spiritual power and vitality.

The setting up of the Virat Hindu Samaj was not the birth of just another organization. It was meant as a platform where different denominations in Hinduism could get together and discuss common problems. It has two aspects. One aspect is solidarity, the other aspect is social reform because without social reform you cannot have solidarity. If you continue to treat lakhs of fellow Hindus as if they were second class citizens, how can you expect Hinduism to be strong? And, naturally, the adverse forces will first try and strike us at our weakest point.

We must never forget that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and if the Harijans are discriminated against or continue to feel that they are second class Hindus, naturally they will be our weakest link, they will be the most vulnerable to pressures and temptations. It is indeed remarkable that despite centuries of oppression they continue to remain an integral part of Hindu society. It is now our prime responsibility to clasp them to our breast, to bring them on par as equal members of Hindu society.

Today we live in an age in which even if one of your sons is unfairly treated, that son will revolt against you even though he is your own flesh and blood. How can you expect millions of people who are called Hindus to continue to accept a second class position in Hindu

society? This is no longer possible. It is most undesirable, most dangerous for the welfare of Hinduism. Therefore, one part of our movement is social reform. We must get rid of all this nonsense. We must enable the Harijans to enter the temples like any other Hindus, to partake of social dining and so on. There should not be any discrimination. Every caste can continue to have its own customs, its own marriages. We are not interfering with anybody's personal life in that way. But there can be no discrimination and there can be no hatred.

Also, we are talking about these dowry deaths, and another social evil like alcoholism which is beginning to eat into the very heart of our society. You have a situation now when even youngsters before they begin to earn any money start drinking alcohol. What sort of a society are we building? Corruption is rampant everywhere. Moral and social values have eroded. A wrong definition of secularism has caused us to throw the baby out along with the bath water so far as education is concerned. We do not teach any religion, any religious values, because we are terrified that we will be accused of going against secularism.

As a result, there is no value system today in the country. The joint family is breaking up, they cannot teach values, the schools cannot teach them. Where is the younger generation going to get its values from? So far as the precept and the example of the older generations are concerned, the less said the better. Corruption today has become a way of life.

The other side of the coin is solidarity, oneness. All Hindu organizations must get together, whether we are Sanatan Dharma or Arya Samaj, Chinmaya Mission or Ramakrishna Mission, or any of the other myriad missions. Indeed we have Buddhists and Jains and Sikhs speaking at our meetings, because we want to bring them also together. We do not only want to react. I myself come from the only Muslim majority State in India, and I have been representing that State for many years in Parliament. We have no animus

against the Muslims. That is why I do not like this whole Hindu renaissance presented as a sort of a confrontation between the Hindus and the Muslims. Certainly, if our religion is attacked by anybody we will take necessary measures for self-defence. We are not going to be on the defensive any longer, I have no doubt about that. But that does not mean that we should seek scapegoats or that we should try and take the easy path by throwing our own sins and projecting our insecurities upon others. We are eighty per cent in this country. Why should we be on the defensive? Why should we lack self-confidence? If Hinduism is able to have a renaissance, if Hinduism is able to have the sort of movement that we are trying to build, I can assure you no power on earth can in any way harm our interests or harm our nation. That is my sincere belief.

The Hindu renaissance is the fact under way. There is a stirring today. I called a meeting in Delhi and a million people turned up. We called a meeting in Cochin, half a million people turned up. We called a meeting in Patna, again half a million people turned up. Why is this? I am not in political power, I am not offering them anything. I am not asking for their vote, I am not connected with any political party. But I am trying to put before them the message of the Hindu renaissance, and it seems to me that this has touched a chord deep in the hearts of the Hindu psyche.

People are beginning to feel that there is at last a positive, 21st-century oriented movement, which is proud of Hinduism and seeks to make it into a powerful instrument for social reform and spiritual regeneration. It is a difficult path, like the razor's edge, but we have to go across that path. There is no shortcut to our renaissance, to our revolution, but despite the dangers and difficulties we must arise, awake and move forward boldly towards the goal. As the *Kathopanished* has it:

uttashtita, jagrata prapya varan-nibodhata,
kshurasva dhara nishita duratyaya
durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti.

Orthodoxy and heterodoxy

ZIYA-UL-HASAN FARUQI

ORTHODOXY in Indian Islam has been an imported phenomenon. It came to India, in the first instance, in the wake of the Muslim settlements in the western and the north-western parts of India mainly in the 11th and the 12th centuries and, then, with the establishment of Muslim rule in the thirteenth century. Its function was to try to maintain the Islamic community as an integral institution, united and homogenous in its structure and principles, indifferent to distinction of race, and independent of the political organisation which might from time to time claim to govern this or that portion of Muslim territory. From this it followed that the duty of its custodians, i.e., the 'Ulama' was to indoctrinate all ranks of society with habits of thought, principles of action and judgement in conformity with its ideals.

In India, however, the situation was a bit different. Until now it had

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to operate in regions where Muslims were in an overwhelming majority; and in some cases the total population was Muslim. In such areas, in the preceding centuries and even after, we find that elements that were essentially local or indigenous, and consequently heterodox from the viewpoint of Islamic tradition, were frequently assimilated within Islam and the legitimacy of belonging to orthodox tradition was conferred upon them. Here, in our country, where the Muslims have always been in minority, orthodoxy seems to have been not so liberal. Generally, it has remained indifferent, and where it has moved towards such a process, it has moved hesitatingly, yielding nothing of any far-reaching consequence.

It was the Turks who established Muslim rule in India. They were Hanafis and followed the 'Ulama of Samarkand and Bukhara which, during those days, were the centres of Muslim scholarship, putting more emphasis on *fiqh* than on any other branch of Islamic learning. The 'Ulama that came in the wake of the establishment of Turkish rule and kept on coming to India in succeeding years, more or less, belonged to the same school. 'The standard of orthodoxy came thus to be based on works or *fiqh* whose authority was recognized by the learned men of Central Asia, and as these learned men generally followed the Hanafi *fiqh*, orthodoxy in Muslim India came to mean *taglid* of the Sunni Hanafi *fiqh* as represented by the Central Asian scholars of the eleventh and the twelfth centuries.¹

The advent of the Muslims on the Indian scene, particularly in the thirteenth century, and the subsequent consolidation of their political power led to the conversion of a large indigenous population to Islam. These converts were now as much entitled to belong to the Muslim community as any other Muslim, though they still possessed their pre-conversion customs and habits. On the other hand, the

emigrants who had decided to settle down in India, were also to be influenced by their environment. It was, thus, necessary for the 'Ulama and the *fujaha* to permit themselves the exercise of independent judgement in view of the new facts of life. The legal categories of 'Urf and 'adah provided an opportunity for such an adjustment. But the inherent rigidity of the concept of *taglid* which orthodoxy considered (and still considers) its backbone, was a great hindrance in the way of accommodation and assimilation.

Further, perhaps, the 'Ulamá and the *fujaha* and other components of the ruling class headed by the Sultan, were more concerned with the consolidation of their political power. And once they had consolidated themselves, they remained occupied and contented with the fruits of their political hegemony and social domination.

It was unfortunate that orthodoxy during Muslim rule in India basically had, by and large, played a negative role. For the positive role that it could play, it did almost nothing. This may appear to be a harsh judgement. But one cannot ignore an historical fact. It stood for unconditional obedience to the ruler whose only obligation was not to apostasize. Beyond that it did nothing. Quite contrary to the *Sunnah* of the pious Caliphs, orthodoxy had practically absolved the ruler of all responsibility to the community and this almost assumed the status of a doctrine, adherence to which was regarded a religious duty.

Thus, by implication, orthodoxy allowed itself to be used by the kings and the Sultans in their own interests who, although they found it sometimes irksome, generally saw advantage in keeping it in their service. There are examples when independent 'Ulama or the Sufis criticized the rulers for their excesses or actions contrary to the *Shari'ah*. Official 'Ulama did not have the courage even to do this. But the rulers knew how to silence all criticism by posing themselves as the champions of Islam, by way of waging wars against the infidels

or persecuting heretics and heterodox groups discovered and condemned by the representatives of orthodoxy...

During the prime of Mughal rule, Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi (1564-1624) and his descendants and followers maintained the traditions of Sunni orthodoxy by preventing free thinking and deviation from the accepted norms. There is no need to go into detail. The story is well-known. The point to be considered and pondered over is that resistance to ideas, beliefs and practices that were judged as contrary to the doctrines of the *Shari'ah*, was mainly purported to keep the ruling class, particularly the ruler and the nobility, on the right path, i.e., on the path of conformity to the norms of orthodoxy. And it was essential, as orthodoxy itself totally depended on the ruler who wielded all political power. Here, again, no attempt was made to take stock of the Indian situation and strive for accommodation and assimilation, conferring legitimacy on the elements that were to be assimilated.

The first hundred years of Mughal rule provided a golden opportunity for such an endeavour. In the world of art and architecture there was a successful attempt for such a blending. The provincial dynasties had encouraged such deviations even before the establishment of Mughal rule. But, in matters of beliefs, customs and rituals, both at the centre and in the provinces, orthodoxy remained unmoved and inflexible. It faithfully kept to its established tradition, leaving the masses, mainly consisting of local Indian converts who, in most cases, originally belonged to the lower and the middle ranks of the Hindu society and tribal communities, distinct and different from one another in their customs, rituals and mores. It was only the Kalimah and the feeling of their being Muslims that united them with the other components of the larger Muslim community.

But, when Mughal rule declined and its fall became imminent, there emerged a realization that with the threatened disintegration of the political power, the solidarity of the

1. M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1967, p. 58.

Muslims as a community was also in danger. The first expression of this realization is seen in the strong reaction of Shah Waliullah (1702-1762) of Delhi to the changed situation. He was great in many respects. He was a religious thinker of the first order. He reminded his contemporaries of the intellectual pursuits of al-Ghazali (d.1111) and al-Shatibi (d. 1318). But he remained medieval in his thinking and one fails to find any evidence to show that he aimed at a reinterpretation of the sources of religion in order to adapt law and practice to existing circumstances... It is indeed tragic to see a personality so powerful, sincere and perspicacious as Shah Waliullah turn from one unworthy potentate to another with the expectation that he would restore the supremacy of the Islamic way of life.²

His conception of a universal order, his principle of *tatbiq*, his criticism of *taqlid* — all this sometimes led his readers to conclude that he laid the foundation of modernism in Indian Islam. But one is bewildered when one reads his *Wasiyat-namah* wherein, in the first *wasiyat*, he strongly pleads for *taqlid* and says that the Muslims, in matters of belief, should adopt and follow the ways of the early masters among *ahl-i-Sunnat* and should avoid investigating into matters which the *Salaf* had ignored. And in matters of detail only those 'Ulama who were well versed in *fiqh* and *hadith* were to be followed. In the seventh *wasiyat* he observes that in Hindustan where his ancestors had come and settled, he is a stranger. He is proud of his Arab ancestry and the Arabic language which have kept him so close to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)...

Shah Waliullah's stand in respect of orthodoxy was thus a continuation of Shaikh Sarhindi's 'Islamic' assertions. It, however, assumed new dimensions, with far-reaching implications at a time when the decline and disintegration of Muslim political power seemed imminent. He also had the full realization of the fact that if nothing was done to salvage the Muslim community from the deteriorating situation, the position

of the Muslims as a religious and socio-cultural entity in India might also be in jeopardy. He, therefore, wrote and insisted that the Indian Muslims must not accept the contemporary decline.

His sons and successors continued the tradition. They even enlarged the scope of efforts for the preservation of the identity of the Muslims as a respected community.³ On the one hand, Shah Abdul Aziz, Shah Abdul Qadir and Shah Rafi'uddin turned to the study of the *Qur'an*, the popularisation of religious knowledge, the creation of a new aspiration to study, understand and live according to the doctrines of the Shari'ah. On the other, the efforts of leaders like Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (1786-1831),⁴ Shah Isma'il Shahid (1781-1831) and Mawlawi Sharifatullah⁵ of Bengal made the movement for religious revival intense and widespread.

In the field of actions, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was the best representative of that strand of *waliullahi* school of thought which aimed at the purification of Muslim society from un-Islamic beliefs and practices and at a return to pristine Islam. It was he who transformed this reformist school into a *jihad* movement.

3. Z.H. Faruqi, 'The Role of the 'Ulama' in Islam in Southern Asia', edited by Dietmar Rothermund, Wiesbaden, 1975, p. 78.

4. It should be noted here that the inspiring soul behind him and Shah Isma'il was the illustrious personality of Shah 'Abdul Aziz (1746-1824).

5. Mawlawi Sharifatullah was the founder of the Fara'idhiyah movement. He was born in 1764 at Bahadurpur (Distt. Faridpur of Bengal). At the age of eighteen he went on pilgrimage to Mecca and stayed at Hijaz for about twenty years. It is hard to say how much he came to know there about the Wahabis and their doctrines. On his return to India in 1802 he started a religious reform movement and called it Fara'idhiyah. It was a protest against the religious decadence of the Muslims and at the same time a manifestation of the socio-economic unrest among the Bengal peasantry and craftsmen.

6. Mawlawi Nanawtawi, during the days of the Revolt of 1857 was the commander of the forces that for a while ousted the British authority from the area they were operating in. Shamli, a small town in the present district of Muzaffarnagar in U.P., was the centre of their activity.

At this juncture, a new element, i.e., the British, had intruded into the Indian situation. For the Muslims, particularly for those among them who were fully awake and sensitive to the situation, the spread of British political and cultural influence, augmented by the activities of the Christian missionaries, was a new challenge. Now, on the one hand, they were worried about the social and spiritual conditions of their co-religionists in villages and far-flung areas who, they thought, were not steeped in Islamic tradition and whose beliefs and social customs, in some respects, did not conform to the basic norms as laid down in the *Qur'an* and the Sunnah; on the other, they considered the new challenge from abroad more dangerous for these co-religionists of theirs as they could easily succumb to the Christian missions generously supported by the imperialists of different shades.

Thus, they had to fight on two fronts — one against the aberrations and accretions in which Muslim masses, in different regions and in many a case far from their cultural and spiritual centres, were deeply steeped (thanks to the constant negligence of orthodoxy throughout the centuries of Muslim rule in India) and needed a thorough reform, and the other against the political, cultural and spiritual assault on them, which was basically Christian.

Sayyid Ahmad was killed in the battle of Balakot in 1831. In his death the movement suffered a great setback. However, the *mujahidin* continued their fight with their headquarters in the Frontier and with the help they received from Hindustan until the Punjab was annexed by the British. Its impetus was, however, used, in spite of the internal confusion and division among the *mujahidin* and their suppression by the British in the Revolt of 1857.

After the upheaval of 1857, British rule in India was finally established. Now the Muslim intelligentsia was broadly divided into two groups, and both of them saw the salvation of the Muslims in edu-

cation. For the purpose of this study, Aligarh and Deoband may be treated as the best representatives of these two groups. Deoband was orthodox and claimed inspiration from the *Waliullahi* school of thought. As some of the founders of the Darul-Ulum at Deoband had actively participated in the Revolt of 1857, it became the manifestation of a militant spirit of resistance to the domination of the British and of western culture. This clearly indicates that Deoband was the vanguard of orthodoxy in Indian Islam and it still performs the same function.

Aligarh, on the other hand, took to western education, and its guiding soul, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817—1898), a versatile mind and a man of strong character and moral integrity, shocked orthodoxy by declaring that the traditional view of Islam was a real hindrance to progress. Strongly influenced as he was by the nineteenth century European rationalism and natural philosophy, Sir Sayyid applied 'the criterion of "conformity to nature" to the contents of systems of beliefs and concluded that Islam paramountly justified itself on this principle. Thus reason with him was the overriding standard.⁷ Here, he went to the extreme and invited the opposition of orthodoxy which concluded that by reviving the tradition of the Mu'tazila and the Muslim philosophers whom it had totally excluded from the pious category of *aslaq*, he was undermining the very basis of the *Din*. Certainly, it was the weakest point in his approach to understanding and interpreting the *Qur'an*. His was a personal interpretation, an attempt at integrating a given set of ideas into Islam. And it was bound to be rejected. But it was unfortunate that the rejection of Sir Sayyid on this count led to a total rejection of his ideas about the divinely ordained role of religion in human society, about the fatal effect to *taqlid* on the human mind and, thus, in a way, the negation of the Quranic emphasis on a process of change as a divine law in the scheme of things in the whole universe and about the

inevitable need of *ijtihad* for religiously intellectual strivings in order to formulate and reformulate religious beliefs in view of ever-changing situations in history. Sir Sayyid's statement about *ijtihad* is, to the present writer, quite in accord with the orthodox position and it could lead, if accepted and implemented by the 'Ulama through their sincere endeavours, to far-reaching consequences in the best interests of the Muslim community in India...

Sir Sayyid's attempt to formulate a new *Ilm-ikalam* did win over some people to his side but generally it was not acceptable to Muslims. This might have disheartened him. Further, the circumstances also forced him to be contented with his success in convincing the Muslims that 'new' education could no longer be ignored. They had to accept it with all its implications.

The spread of new education among Muslims gradually led to the growth of a new educated class with western orientation. Though emotionally very much attached to Islamic traditions, intellectually it was, by and large, so enamoured of the progress and advancement made in the West that many among this new type of Muslim intelligentsia were led to look down upon the *mawlawis* and *mawlawas* who were trained in a different set of traditions. This, in turn, made the Islamic tradition appear to them as something very backward and hence of little importance. They saw their worldly progress only in adopting the western culture. Thus, for the first time in history we find two types of Muslim intelligentsia educated and trained in two different academic and intellectual traditions, strange to each other and dividing the society into compartments of conflicting attitudes, inclinations, priorities and interests. This had never happened before in such glaring terms.

This was indeed a new situation which alarmed the Islamic sensitivity of persons like Shibli (1857-1914), Hali (1837-1914), Iqbal (1876-1938) and Mawlana Azad (1888-1958). Shibli deeply felt the absence of coordination between religious and secular education and the growing

rift in the Indian Muslim community. He was one of those 'Ulama who put forward the idea that, in order to provide a remedy to this malaise, there should be institutions where both types of education could be imparted side by side. Their efforts to give practical shape to this idea resulted in the establishment of the Darul-Ulum Nadwatul 'Ulama in 1894. But, as the *majlis* which had founded it was dominated by the orthodox 'Ulama, it gradually drifted towards orthodoxy and today the only difference between Nadwah and Deoband is the former's emphasis on Arabic language and literature...

Shibli's main interest was literature, history and theology. He was not happy with the religious and political views of Sir Sayyid. At Aligarh, where he taught Arabic and Persian, he was respected by his students and in many of them he succeeded in creating the attitude that, in order to live with honour and prestige, one had to depend upon one's own spiritual and moral resources. He worked out a programme of displaying the brilliance of these resources through his writings on various Islamic subjects, which reminded Muslims unforgettable of their splendid heritage.

Unlike Sir Sayyid, in theology he was neither a radical nor a rationalist, but he 'certainly aimed at reviving the *rationalizing* dialectic of the classical Muslim theology. His theology presents an advance over that of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's in that it was not negative. Being a theologian, trained in the traditional way, he saw the necessity of continuity and, therefore, attempted to come to terms with the late nineteenth century scientific world-views. But at the same time it is clear that his restatement was *adaptive*, not *creative* (italics ours). However, even this much adaptation proved too much for his fellow 'Ulama who branded him as a free-thinker.⁸

If Shibli could be branded a free-thinker, a heterodox and even *Kafir*, how could Iqbal who was not an

7. Fazlur-Rahman, *Islam*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1966, p. 218.

8. Fazlur-Rahman, 'Muslim Modernism in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent', in *BSOAS*, 1958, xxi/1, p. 85.

'alim and whose entire education had been modern, be given a respectable place as a religious thinker. Orthodoxy, inspite of his rejection of liberalism, would only recognize him as a great poet of Islam. And nothing beyond. A representative of orthodoxy, who enjoys the status of a great 'alim in the Muslim world of today, commands an enviable respect even among a large section of the Muslim intelligentsia with modern education and is never tired of reciting Iqbal's poetry, once remarked that he wished Iqbal had not delivered his six lectures that were later published with the title of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

Mawlana Azad was greatly respected by the 'Ulama, particularly by those who shared their political views with him. They had once gone even so far as to confer the title of *Imam-ul-Hind* on him. It is, however, striking that they did not honour him with the title of *Imam-ul-Ulama*. The reason is that, though they acknowledged his erudition in Islamic learning, they were not happy with his views about *taqlid*. The 'Hanafi' orthodoxy considered this a deviation, a sort of heterodoxy which could not be approved of. His *Tarjuman-ul-Qur'an* is a monumental achievement of Islamic scholarship in modern India. But to orthodoxy it is an aberration, because, at various places in the *Tarjuman*, he has pointed out to the pitfalls of some of the early commentators of the *Qur'an* in their understanding of certain verses of the sacred Book. He has bitterly criticized the orthodox approach to its study and has attempted to demolish the position of Fakhruddin Razi (d. 1209) whom orthodoxy considers its *Imam* because of his defence and championing the cause of Ash'arite creed in Islamic theology...

The *Tarjuman*, however, has been widely read and it has tremendously influenced the modernists among the Muslims in the formation of their attitude towards religion, morality and the problems of the present-day life. It has been acclaimed by them as a commentary which is clear, reasonable and satisfying, a commentary free from any tendency towards apologetics and from any

attempts to read in the *Qur'an* what is really not there, a product of deep personal conviction, of belief unpolluted by any extraneous considerations and the finest example of constructive thinking enjoined on the Muslims.⁹

Barring the activities of the Tablighi Jamaat which we will discuss later, both the 'Ulama and the western-oriented Muslim intelligentsia, generally, remained so much occupied with politics, national and international, during the decades before Independence, that the work of Islamization of the poor and backward Muslims in villages and towns was completely neglected. Yes, the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind under the leadership of the Deobandi 'Ulama started *maktabs* and *madrasahs* in certain parts of the country and engaged itself in some *tabligh* (missionary) work; Mawdudi's Jamiat-i-Islami also worked among the Muslim youth in schools and colleges and among those in professions in order to protect them from falling a prey to the 'taghutī' (devilish) ideologies of nationalism and communism and keep their faith firm in their hearts in the all-pervading darkness of the materialistic age. But, as a matter of fact, it was politics that dominated the scene so much so that sometimes even theology was dragged into the arena of politics to prove or disprove the validity of the position taken by the various political groups.

In 1947 the Indian sub-continent was divided and the independent States of India and Pakistan came into existence. India declared herself a democratic-secular State with the supremacy of Parliament to legislate in all matters concerning the citizens of India, of course, subject to constitutional limitations. This was entirely a new situation in which the Indian Muslims found themselves. Now the problems facing them were many and some of them very complicated. These problems were psychological, social, educational, cultural and what not. On the practical plane the question arose how orthodoxy which had to operate now in a different milieu,

would react to the new situation — a situation in which there would be much scope for heterodoxy to feel encouraged and to flourish.

In a modern democracy which aspires to be secular, communities as groups and individuals as citizens are co-partners in all State affairs. They enjoy equal rights. As the State is neutral and does not have a religion of its own there can be no categories of believers and non-believers so far as the rights and obligations of the citizens are concerned. In the whole course of Islamic history, orthodoxy had never faced a situation like this. It, however, attempted to resolve the tangle by invoking the precedent of the mutual contract by the Prophet of Islam between the Muslims and the Jews of Madinah. It interpreted the Indian Constitution as a covenant between the Muslims and the non-Muslims of India to establish a secular State.

An Islamic State established and run in accord with the precepts of the *Shari'ah* is the ideal of orthodoxy — a dream which it would continue to cherish. This is the only political pattern that can be theologically aspired for and justified. All other patterns are simply historical developments and may be accepted as a matter of political convenience and expediency. That there could be a socio-politico-economic pattern where the Muslims and the non-Muslims have permanently to live and cooperate with each other on an equal footing, thus collectively converting themselves into an *ummah-ul-wahidah*, was an idea totally unacceptable and extremely repugnant to orthodoxy. And the Muslims who accept it as such on the basis of any modern political philosophy are heterodox and, to a section of orthodoxy, even heretics.

That orthodoxy has been consistent in its stand is highly commendable. It is altogether a different matter to expect from it that it should reinterpret or reformulate its theology to meet all and ever-changing situations. It should, however, be noted for good that even the most liberal interpreters of *Shari'ah* would hardly dare fulfil such an

expectation. This is why the present writer in moments of his deeply inspired thinking has always reached the conclusion that the future of Islam in India is safe only in the hands of orthodoxy. He has been a critic of orthodoxy in many respects and has vehemently advocated flexibility in its attitude. But his advocacy for such a flexibility has been confined to asking for new interpretations and adjustments within the framework of orthodoxy itself.

Let us take the problem of change in Muslim Personal Law in order to explain the point. Besides the Hindu protagonists of a uniform civil code for the whole of India, there are *ultras* among the Muslim modernists, who see no harm for the Muslim community in a uniform civil code legislated by the Indian Parliament and promulgated by the Government of India. This is tantamount to a fundamental departure from the position that in the present-day Indian situation where the Muslim community is deeply entangled in a struggle for the search and safeguard of its *self-identity*, it is only the Personal Law that can be a permanent guarantee for its preservation. And to the present writer this position appears reasonable, sound and valid. It is self-explanatory and does not need any elaboration.

The point emphasised by the *moderates* among the modernists and among the 'Ulama is worthy of our serious consideration. While rejecting the views of the *ultras*, they argue that there is a distinction between *din* and *shari'ah*. While *din* is immutable, the *shari'ah* has constantly been changing. Further, there are injunctions in the *Qur'an* which are explicit, and they could not be changed. Certain elements of the Muslim Personal Law are based on explicit injunctions of the *Qur'an* and, therefore, they stand where they are.

Likewise, there are *ahadith* of legislative import, which are reliable and sound by all standards of rational scrutiny and which form the basis of several aspects of Muslim Personal Law. Such *ahadith* would

in no case be ignored, suspended or rejected just to satisfy the whims of the *ultras* or to surrender to the requirements of a particular situation which might change tomorrow. No community, and particularly a community with a revealed religion and a system of sound prophetic traditions, can afford to be a plaything of situations. Yet, there is always scope for change in laws which are not based on explicit Qur'anic injunctions or on such sound *ahadith* that have previously formed a basis for Islamic legislation.

Moreover, there is ample scope for reform in the existing Hanafi Law. Legislation relating to personal laws in Egypt, for example, has been kept within the limits of the *Qur'an* and the Sunnah by considering the rules of all the four schools of Sunni Islam and those of Imamiyah Shi'i jurisprudence. This has worked well and the Egyptian reforms relating to Personal Law are reasonable and meet the requirements of the modern age. In the present Indian situation, however, the question remains: are the Indian Muslims psychologically prepared to permit the Indian Parliament help them enact reforms in their Personal Law?¹⁰ The present writer thinks that it is possible provided the majority community succeeds in convincing them that it really believes in democracy and secularism, and is earnest in giving due protection to their cultural and religious rights. Even then, the initiative to introduce necessary changes in the Personal Law of the Muslims must be taken by the 'Ulama and the Muslim jurists.

The rigid attitude of the Muslim Personal Law Board formed some years back at a convention of the 'Ulama of different shades and Muslim jurists, will have to be abandoned. Its function should be to give a lead and immediately undertake the work of reforms and adjustments within the framework of orthodoxy itself and on the lines suggested above. This is the weapon with which it could be able to fight the

10. It is a hard fact of life that without the sanction of Parliament and the promulgative authority of the Executive no reforms can be implemented.

growing strength of heresy and heterodoxy. Tremendous changes have taken place and are in the process of taking place in the socio-economic relationships within the Muslim community as well as outside it between different groups and communities of the country. And as they can no longer be ignored, orthodoxy is called upon to play the positive role of examining its bases and then begin responding to exigencies emerging out of these changes. It claims to be responsible to Allah. It is high time now to prove that it is and has the capacity and capability to honour its commitment to Allah by transforming the precepts of the *shari'ah* into social and moral values that, in turn, would certainly and purposefully strengthen the religious base of the Muslim community in India.

The Indian Muslims are not a monolithic society with one language, one cultural pattern and a uniform outlook about life. If one is allowed to refer to the concept of Little and Great Tradition as defined by cultural anthropology,¹¹ one can say that as there are, broadly speaking, three main groups in the Great Tradition of the Indian Muslim community, (1) the 'Ulama and people of madrasahs, mosques and shrines; (2) new educated class with western orientation and people in industry, business and professions and (3) the poor and backward Muslims, mainly belonging to the lower and the lower middle strata of society which includes the peasantry, artisans, craftsmen, etc.

Similarly, these three groups also exist in the Little Tradition of regional Muslim communities. Recent sociological and anthropological researches have endeavoured to bring out numerous traits of the cultures of these regional communities to show that they are mutually distinct and different in many respects. Conclusions on the basis of the data provided by these researches also show that Muslim communities belonging to the Little Tra-

11. Intiaz Ahmad, 'Exclusion and Assimilation in Indian Islam' in *Socio-Cultural Impact of Islam in India*, edited by Attar Singh, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1976, p. 95.

dition, with all their distinct cultural traits, have always aspired to relate their social and cultural values to those of the Islamic Great Tradition, thus asserting their identity through a two-way process of Islamization, as an integral component of the identity of a larger and over-all religion-wide Muslim community.¹² Recently, the activities of the Tablighi Jama'at have tremendously contributed to this ever-increasing assertion of the Little Tradition to belong to the Great Tradition.

The founder of the Tablighi Jama'at was Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944) who 'combined in himself Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's steadfastness in conforming to the *Shari'ah*, Shah Waliullah's spirit of tolerance; moderation and compromise and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's determination to adhere to a cause and its principles'.¹³ He was a suffi-lam and organised his movement, declaring that his conception of *tabligh* held the three strands of *Shari'at*, *tariqat* and *haqiqat* together and aimed at inculcating among his adherents propriety in morals, transactions and social habits. He was wisely careful in keeping away his movement from politics. He was fully aware of the fact that all religious and social reform movements in Islam had always tended to become political, and this had done great harm to the original purpose behind them. He forbade all political discussions among his preaching groups and asked them never to enter into controversial issues.

Through his movement, which is unique as a movement of adult education on a mass basis, he 'aimed at bringing all sections of the community together — the illiterate and the educated, the poor and the rich — to make them realize their common bond of religion and to strengthen that bond'.¹⁴ Experience of work among the Mewatis had convinced him that open and direct

criticism of un-Islamic beliefs, customs and practices often alienated the people who held them, from his programme. It was, therefore, harmful to the cause. It would yield fruitful results if, in the first instance, religious awareness is created among the people. This would eventually lead to a deep consciousness of obligations that the *shari'ah* enjoins upon the believers and they would of their own accord and under the pressure of an inner urge, automatically take to Islamic observances.

Though puritanical and revivalist in character, the Tablighi movement has shown a miraculous tolerance and moderation in its preaching experiments. Orthodoxy has never been so tolerant. And this is why its contribution to the creation of a sense of communal solidarity among Indian Muslims, no matter to which region and indigenous tradition they belonged and to what life styles they were used, is of historic import and significance and much greater than that of any other religious reform movement organised by the 'Ulama. Operating simultaneously on both the levels, of Little and Great Tradition, it has proved itself as a powerful force of Islamization in recent history.

Taking a clue from the approach of the Tablighi Jama'at in its experiments in mass education, what orthodoxy needs in the present circumstances is an imaginative leadership with initiative and courage to make adjustments to the new situation in which history has placed it in this country. It is called upon, on the one hand, to accelerate the process of Islamization and, on the other, to reformulate its religious thought and undertake a well thought out scheme of necessary changes in Islamic laws within the orthodox framework. If this is not done, the Muslim community in India may soon have to face a process of disintegration. In a democratic-secular India where the Muslims along with others enjoy constitutional freedom, this is the way that leads to a sort of strong and sound communal solidarity capable of withstanding the destructive forces operating from within as well as from without simultaneously.

12. Intiaz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

24 13. M. Anwarul Haq, *The Faith Movement of Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1972, p. 99.

14. M. Anwarul Haq, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

Christian responses

S. KAPPEN

IN this paper I do not propose to give a sociological analysis of Hindu-Christian relations today. I shall instead try to trace the root cause of the militant stance of organizations like the RSS towards the Christian presence in India. That there has been a heightening of Hindu militancy is clear from the recent organized assault on Christian fishermen in Kanyakumari district and on Christian institutions and churches elsewhere in Tamil Nadu,¹ and from the attempts to introduce new legislation aimed at preventing conversions.² The question arises, is the new upsurge of anti-Christian sentiment provoked by developments within Indian Christianity or is it to be attributed to changes within Hinduism and the civilizational crisis affecting Indian society as a

whole? An adequate answer can be given only at a later time when the student of history will be in a position to maintain the necessary critical distance from the events concerned. The following reflections are no more than gropings, subject to revision.

It is often alleged that what provokes opposition to Christianity on the part of Hindus is its foreignness, its religious militancy and the nature and extent of its secular involvement. This raises two questions. How far is Indian Christianity foreign, its religious stance aggressive, and its secular involvement geared to domination? Does its foreign provenance, religious stance, and secular practice account for the resurgence of Hindu hostility? In the search for an answer, it is important to maintain the historical perspective. Profound changes have taken place in the doctrine and practice of Christianity especially in recent decades. Nor has Hinduism remained static. Only by taking note of the changes that have occurred shall we be able to divine the future course of Hindu-Christian relations.

1. 'Communal Clashes in Kanyakumari', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XVII, Nos 17&18, April 24 — May 1, 1982, pp. 717-8.

M.K. Shankar and Sridhar Achar, 'Story of the Kanyakumari Clashes', *Samata*, Documentation by the caste-class study programme of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in co-operation with the William Carey Study and Research Centre, 1882/1, pp. 48-58.

2. George Mathew, 'Politicisation of Religion: Conversion to Islam in Tamil Nadu', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XVII, No 25, June 19, 1982, pp. 1031.

Jesus of Nazareth, whose prophetic movement became over the years institutionalised into Christianity, was himself a son of Asia. He hailed from Palestine which had close

cultural and trade relations with the Indian sub-continent. According to one historian³ the Buddhist influence had spread as far as Iran and Palestine. The same scholar also points out the significant fact that the head of the monastic community of Qumran — whose members lived in caves on the shores of the Dead Sea around the first century before our era — and the Buddha share the identical title of 'The Teacher of Righteousness'. The possibility cannot be ruled out that Jesus had come into contact with the Qumran sect and the teachings of the Enlightened One. The issue is for historians to settle.

One thing, however, no scholar can deny, that is, the close resemblance between the message of the Buddha and that of the dissenting Galilean. Like Jesus, Gautama preached a kingdom of righteousness to come, proclaimed universal love as the supreme rule of life; ruthlessly criticised ritualism, caste inequality, and the notion of ritual purity; called in question the meaning of sacrifices and the worship of gods and goddesses, and defied all existing taboos by eating from the hands of social outcasts.⁴ One might call the Buddha the foremost among the forerunners of Jesus, next only to the Hebrew prophets. Despite real differences, the life and message of the two represent the same ethical thrust in the evolution of the Asian spirit. Truly, Jesus is more kin to the Indian tradition than to the western.

Be that as it may, what reached our shores was not Jesus of Nazareth in the primal radiance of his life and teaching but a Jesus recast in the cultural mould first of the hellenist world and then of the slave, feudal, and capitalist society in the West. No wonder, even to this day Christianity has remained a foreign body in Indian society — foreign in regard to cult, dogma, theology, and reli-

3. D.D. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilisation of India in Historical Outline*, Vikas Publications, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 96-7.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-114; Also Dr. Noel Sheth, 'The Buddha's Attitude to Caste', *Negation — A Journal of Culture and Creative Praxis*, October-December, 1982, No 4, pp. 2-26.

gious law. Foreign too are its centre of power and chief source of income. However, from very early times the foreign character of their religion was experienced as a problem by Christians themselves. And their attempt to overcome the cultural barrier resulted in the policy of *adaptation*.

Adaptation consisted in taking over certain cultural forms from the Indian tradition, while leaving intact the corpus of Christian tradition. The early Jesuit missionaries, for instance, announced themselves as European Brahmins and conformed to local traditions, overlooking what they considered to be superstitions.⁵ With the nationalist euphoria in the wake of Independence, the practice of adaptation gained a new momentum. The ecclesiastical hierarchy was indigenized; liturgical services began to be held in the vernacular.

In recent years, however, the realization has dawned on Christians that adaptation does not go far enough and that there is need for a new approach. The slogan now is *inculturation*. While adaptation sought an indigenous form for an imported content held eternal and immutable, inculturation proceeds from the recognition that the content itself needs to be rethought and reborn in the Indian context. This, definitely, is an advance on the former. Nevertheless, even the new approach is inadequate as it is vitiated by a twofold lack of criticism:

There is first a failure radically to criticise the content of the Christian tradition. What is often taken for the perennially valid core of tradition is nothing but the product of western history. There is, on the other hand, the failure to critically evaluate the Indian tradition, which inculturationists tend to reduce to the Hindu tradition or, still worse, to the Brahminic tradition. They fail to distinguish between the culture of the dominant castes and the culture of dissent among the dominated ones. It looks as though they might end up by putting the

5. Abbe Dubois, *The State of Christianity in India During the Early Nineteenth Century*, ed. Sharda Paul, Associated Publishing House, New Delhi, 1977, p. 4.

sacred thread on Jesus, which not even Brahminism, much to its chagrin, could succeed in doing. In the process, it is forgotten that the real challenge today is neither adaptation nor inculturation but *transculturation*, meaning the creation of a new culture of genuine freedom and equality from out of the possibilities offered by the many religious-cultural traditions in India.

Whatever may be the merits of the policy of inculturation, none can gainsay the fact that Indian Christians are today engaged in an anguishing search for an indigenous cultural identity.

How has Hinduism reacted to the foreign character of Christianity? Though in day-to-day social intercourse Hindus might have felt a certain aversion towards the alien beliefs and practices of Christians, their elite was the first to go in for western education, which under British rule was largely in missionary hands. They were open to western civilization in spite of its having been profoundly influenced by Christian ideas. Notwithstanding the nationalist awakening at the time of Independence, Indian leaders had no hesitation in taking over lock, stock and barrel, the legal-bureaucratic-political system of the colonizers, with scant respect for the corresponding indigenous traditions. And, today, by a curious turn of events, while Christians are struggling to strike roots in Indian tradition, Hindus are engaged in outdoing foreigners in being foreign. Their youth are gleefully succumbing to the on-going cultural invasion from the West, spearheaded by multinational capitalism.

What is picked up from the gutters of western civilization finds an honoured place on our altars. We are fast becoming a nation that has mentally emigrated to the West. A belated — I almost said posthumous — tribute of sorts to that sad generation of Anglo-Indians who, despised and ostracised, were forced to find a home in the United Kingdom. Paradoxically, the nostalgia for everything foreign easily coexists with planned regression into the dead past. At any rate, when educated Hindus themselves put a high

premium on whatever comes from abroad from motor cars to comics, it is difficult to believe that the same people find the foreignness of Christianity a scandal and a stumbling block.

The Christianity that came to India presented the picture of a curious unity of opposites. On the one hand, it preached the message of love and universal brotherhood; on the other, it was the inheritor of a long and lurid history of violence and bloodshed in the form of crusades, religious wars, witch-hunting and burning of heretics.⁶ While it announced the liberation of man from sin and misery, it also provided a cover of legitimacy for the colonial looting and enslaving of our people. Its scriptures proclaimed the humane Jesus of Nazareth but what its practice held up was Christ the King out to conquer pagans all over the world.

The militant mood of early missionaries may be seen from a letter which Antonio Francisco Cardim wrote to his confreres in the Jesuit college of Macao in mid-seventeenth century under the title, 'The battles of the Company of Jesus in the glorious province of Japan'. It reads: 'From this royal fortress went out nearly every year preachers of the Gospel in order to make war on the surrounding heathendom, hoisting the regal standard of the Holy Cross on the highest and strongest bastions of idolatry.'

What motivated militant missionary activity was a theology centred upon the church. It tended to identify the church with the Kingdom of God which, for Jesus, meant the end-age of human-divine fullness. The result was the downgrading of the rest of mankind to the status of children of darkness. To be saved, these had to leave 'paganism' behind and join the Christian fold. It is this imperialist theology that held sway among Christians till about a quarter of a century ago. But with the downfall of colonialism, the

upsurge of nationalism in the third world, and the sobering influence of the two world wars, theological reflection slowly shifted its axis from the church to the kingdom of God. This meant returning to the original perspective of Jesus who announced the coming not of the church but of a new humanity founded on justice and love and open to all men and women irrespective of caste, colour or creed.⁸ With that the theology of conversion stood discredited. More and more Christians came to realize that the essential thing was not conversion to the church but conversion to God, a duty devolving upon Christians and non-Christians alike.

The new theology thus cut the ground from under the traditional Christian arrogance. However, it has found consistent expression only in some circles — and their number is steadily increasing — of lay persons, priests and theologians, committed to the creation of a new social order in collaboration with like-minded people of other religions and persuasions. As for the official churches, though their theology has in part made the breakthrough into the open space of prophetic universalism, their practice often continues to smack of the obsolescent theology of conversion. Nevertheless, there is a new preparedness on the part of Christians in general to dialogue with other religions, uninhibited by any dogmatic claim to superiority.

In the colonial period, the Hindu attitude to Christians seems to have been anything but friendly. The following words of Abbe Dubois may be taken as mirroring the state of affairs in the early nineteenth century: 'The Christian religion, which was formerly an object of indifference, or at most of contempt, is at present become, I will venture to say, almost an object of horror.'⁹ If Hindu hostility did not break out into open persecution, it was probably due as much to the fear of the British as to any tradition of tolerance. Where British rule was

only indirect as in the State of Travancore, communal violence did break out. In the mid-19th century, for instance, when Nadar Christian women started covering their breasts in defiance of the prevailing caste rules, there was violent retaliation on the part of the Nair community, and the army had to be called in.¹⁰

During the mass conversions into Christianity in the 1840s in Tinnevelly district of Tamil Nadu, Hindus responded by establishing the Vibuthi Samgam (The Sacred Ash Society) to combat it.¹¹ Around the same time 'The Society for Diffusing the Philosophy of the Four Vedas' was founded in Madras for the purpose of preventing conversions. One is reminded of the activities of the Brahmin-led Hindu Munnani after the Meenakshipuram mass conversion of Harijans into Islam last year.¹² Traditionally, Hinduism could tolerate only such religions as could be integrated within the caste system. Earlier, it had overcome Buddhism by Hinduizing it. But Jainism refused to be so integrated, which resulted in the massacre of over eight thousand Jains at Madurai in the 8th century.¹³

With Independence, mass conversions to Christianity came to an end and Hindu-Christian relations took a turn for the better. Even during the colonial period, there was a certain ambivalence in the attitude of Hindus to the Christian religion. While they were critical of the churches, they were very much open to the Jesus of the Gospels, especially to the ethical message, of the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁴ What

10. Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *The Nadar of Tamilnadu: The Political Culture of a Community in Change*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969, pp. 55-70.

11. *Ibid.* p. 50.

12. Mumtaz Ali Khan, 'Social Organisations and Conversions: Case Study of Meenakshipuram', *Samata*, 1982/1, pp. 1-11.

13. Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1980, p. 80.

14. William Stewart, 'Christian' Presence and Modern Hinduism,' SCM, London, 1964, pp. 62-4, 84.

6. Dr. K. Luke, 'Violence in the History of the West', *Negations*, July-September 1982, No 3, pp. 16-20.

7. C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-seventeenth Century*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1980, p. 15.

8. S. Kappen, *Jesus and Freedom*, Orbis Books, New York, 1977, pp. 53-66.

9. Abbe Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

mediated the message of Jesus was, significantly, less official Christian preaching than the teaching of the Bible as literature in Christian schools and colleges.

The assimilation of the message of the Gospel on the part of Hindu leaders played an important role in initiating a process of self-criticism within Hinduism, which resulted in the founding of the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, and the Ramakrishna Mission. The last mentioned came into being on Christmas eve 1886 when Swami Vivekananda told his followers the story of Jesus and exhorted them 'To become Christs in their turn'.¹⁵ This shows that Jesus himself was never a bone of contention between Christians and Hindus but, rather, a common bond of union. And today when Christians are progressively repudiating the churchist theology of conversion and returning to the universalist, non-sectarian, non-imperialist perspective of the historical Jesus, the revivalist attack on Christianity becomes all the more difficult to account for.

The secular involvement of Christian communities is threefold — social, educational and political. There is a suspicion in some Hindu circles that such involvement is but a means to conversion, which might have been true in the case of some missions in the past, particularly in colonial days. However, the overriding motivation for Christian commitment to service comes from a different source. Unlike cosmic religiosity which seeks the divine in nature without, and gnostic religiosity which seeks it in the Self within, the ethical religiosity of Jesus and the prophets before him sees in the experience of love and human togetherness the privileged point where the divine is encountered.

Therefore, service to one's fellow-men is an essential expression of the Christian experience of God. But as this service took the form of institutions exclusively under Christian control, these became so many centres of social power and created relations of dependence — of the laity on the clergy and of people at

large on the Christian community. Vested institutional interests, in their turn, gave rise to the politics of minority rights. This entire development is today being called in question by many thinking Christians. They argue, rightly; that institutional power cannot be reconciled with Christianity's prophetic mission as such power would compel Christians to align themselves with the ruling classes against the disprivileged and the marginalized.

While the politics of minority rights is still very much alive and is even assuming the monstrous form of communal political parties, critical thinking within Christianity is veering to a theology of total freedom — freedom from every kind of exploitation, domination, and ideological repression. The stress here is not on the minority rights of Christians but on their duty as a prophetic community to take the side of the poor in their struggle for a just society. The new perspective has gained ground during the last two decades and has given birth to activist groups composed of Christians and non-Christians, inspired by the common dream of a humanized world. Even official Christianity has been forced to take note of the new development. Though still in league with status-quoist powers, its pronouncements tend to incorporate the language, if not also the concerns, of prophetic radicalism.

Hindus have, on the whole, responded positively to Christianity's secular involvement in the field of education and health. Religious differences did not prevent them from securing western education in Christian institutions. Even today they set a high value on such education, as may be seen from the demand in the marriage market for convent educated girls. But whether Hindus will be equally well disposed to the increasing political involvement of Christians in favour of the outcastes, the tribals and depressed classes, remains to be seen, as it would adversely affect the vested interests of the dominant castes.

If our analysis is current, the Hindu revivalist opposition to

Christians cannot be adequately explained on the basis of developments within Christianity itself. The explanation lies elsewhere. Religious revivalism and the tensions generated by it are a feature of most third world countries whose cultural identity was destroyed by colonialism. And it is understandable if many Indians envisage the new identity in terms exclusively of Hinduism. But, to understand the concrete forms revivalism takes and the kind of aggressiveness it releases, it is necessary to consider the civilizational crisis affecting Indian society in general and Hinduism in particular.

With no dogma, no central teaching authority, no obligatory cult, and no encompassing organization, Hinduism defies all attempts at definition. One can at the most try to describe its dominant spiritual thrust. And that, in my view, is cosmic religiosity. Cosmic religiosity represents a phase in human development when man sees himself as part of the cosmic process of life and death; as an object controlled by the inexorable laws of nature and not as a subject capable of fathoming his own future. Characteristic of it is the central place given to the mystery of fertility and reproduction — vegetative, animal and human.

The sense of time proper to it is cyclic, not linear nor dialectical. And it finds expression in the daily, monthly, yearly cycle of devotional and cultic practices. Not even *advaita* transcends cosmic religiosity, as the identity it affirms of the Atman and the Brahman is but a spiritualisation of the magical identity between the microcosm and the macrocosm (e.g., the eye and the sun, the breath and the wind). Bhakti, which originally had a strong ethical component, was in course of time absorbed into the mainstream of cosmic spirituality.

There is much that is true and beautiful in cosmic religion. But with the development of science and technology, it has nowhere to draw nourishment from. Today the realization is dawning on people that both nature without and nature within (human nature) are there for them to shape and transform. The

development of productive forces and the on-going struggles for a better life are making them aware that they are their own creators. This indeed is a revolution of consciousness signalling the collapse of cosmic religiosity.

If science and technology are rendering cosmic religiosity obsolete, capitalist relations of production are undermining the caste system which is to Hinduism what the church is to Christianity. The institutionalised inequality of caste is threatened by the abstract equality of commodity exchange. Enforced cooperation is giving way to universal competition: between higher and lower castes, between caste Hindus and outcastes, and between members of the same caste. Even the horizontal solidarity that has in many places replaced the traditional vertical solidarity of caste is faced with the problem of survival. In short, the broader societal framework of Hinduism is falling apart.

Seen from this angle, revivalism is Hinduism's irrational, uncritical response to the fear of self-dissolution. This, of course, does not explain the Hindu militancy towards minority communities but throws light on the psychic climate that generates aggressiveness. There are other aggravating factors, political and economic, which must now be looked into.

Political power is integral to scriptural Hinduism. In the hierarchical structure of caste, the Kshatriya fulfilled the indispensable role of protecting *dharma* including *jati-dharma*. But, due to repeated foreign invasions culminating in British colonialism, Hinduism was deprived of all control over political power. Yet another set-back came in the form of the creation of a secular State following upon Independence. It is therefore understandable that revivalism has also assumed political dimensions. The slogan of Hindu Rashtra points to a last-ditch attempt on the part of Hindu reaction to install a modern version of Kshatriya rule, that would protect Hindu *dharma* and wage war on the *danavas* and *asuras* of today.

To achieve this end, Hindu chauvinists need to extend their electoral

base. Hence their efforts to tighten their hold on the Harijans and establish hegemony over the tribal population, especially because the intermediate castes have already thrown in their lot with one or other political party. An obstacle in their way is Christian presence in the same social constituency. Church activities have raised the social and cultural status of converts from among Harijans and tribals. These have regained a sense of dignity and are no more amenable to political manipulation. This is one reason for the resurgence of Hindu hostility to Christianity.

The caste system helped a privileged minority to maintain a large slave class of Sudras and outcastes. In course of time, the Sudras were able, to some extent, to raise their economic and social position. In many parts of rural India, the outcastes still form the main source of surplus labour for caste Hindus. However, education, elections based on universal suffrage, and the politicisation carried on by activist groups and leftist parties have created a general social awakening among them. They are no longer prepared to submit to the social degradation to which they have been condemned.

But, on the other side, the constraints of capital accumulation are forcing the rural bourgeoisie to resort to super-exploitation either by means of bonded labour or by lowering wages below the value of labour power. It is in the interests of the rural elite to perpetuate, if not reinforce, traditional forms of group dependence and maintain the social backwardness of Harijans who must be denied their traditional rights without in any way being released from their traditional duties. Thus exploitation is compounded with heightened social oppression. No wonder the victims seek emancipation through conversion to Islam or Christianity. This explains the recent mass conversion to Islam of the Harijans of Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu.¹⁶ The event, in turn, sharpened the hostility of Hindu militants towards the minority communities in the State.

16. George Mathew, op. cit.

Here one is reminded of what Kumaran Asan, the great Malayalam poet of Ezhava renaissance, wrote of his own community in the twenties: 'Have the dominant classes among Hindus', he asks, 'shown to the common people even a modicum of the pity and encouragement they deserve? What else is the main reason for people joining other religions? Why the controversy now going on about the demand that the current census report place the common people in a category apart from the class of Hindus?' He goes on to say: 'The evil of caste has become ever more pronounced, and ever more subcastes have come into being. Under the circumstances, the only hope for the poor was Islam or Christianity ... If the supremely merciful God deigned to send the messengers of Christianity to Kerala at so opportune a time, might it not be because he ordained that only such as are prepared to put up with the insupportable evil of caste need remain within Hinduism while the rest could find salvation by joining the Christian fold'?¹⁷

The challenge facing Hinduism is clear: it has to take a qualitative leap to an ethical religiosity that can generate universal love and commitment while preserving on a higher level what is genuinely humanizing in cosmic religiosity. The spiritual resources for such a leap are already there in Indian tradition, particularly in the teachings of the Buddha and the saints of the Bhakti movement. But they could not come to fruition due largely to the hegemony of the priestly class. A similar challenge confronts Christianity as well. It has to recapture the ethical-prophetic thrust of the Gospels which was blunted when the Jesus movement accommodated the cosmic religiosity of the hellenistic world and compromised itself by joining hands with successive ruling classes. Both Hinduism and Christianity must accept the need to die in order to rise up again recharged with the power to humanize society.

17. Kumaranasante gadyalekhanangal (Malayalam), compiled by N.K. Damodaran, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1981, pp. 193, 210.

Sikh dilemmas

INDARJIT SINGH

REVIVALISM implies that the pristine fervour has been lost through the ravages of time. It also implies that the original beliefs and practices have been distorted and are in need of being restored to their original direction and values. From these points of view, Sikhism is unique. It has, within itself, the creative effort perpetually of renewing its skin, so to say. It was conceived as a religion with its core remaining active all the time. It is this core that asserts itself whenever the occasion or the time demands. It transforms the inert and deteriorating peripheral followers into a galvanised force.

This has happened several times in the past and it has the capacity to sustain Sikhism and its pristine fervour again in the future. For that to happen, certain conditions are always discernable but the timing of the re-assertion, of the moral and

fervid excitation by the core of the peripheral mass, has always been enigmatic. The reason is that the Sikhs have an infinite capacity for inviting suffering upon themselves to boost morale and, simultaneously, to create changes in the behaviour of those trying to thwart it from pursuing its original purpose. When things go beyond possible redemption through self-suffering, Sikhism has always combated the destructive forces by means which might tend to cause damage both to themselves and to those trying to stand in the way of its just and morally correct postures and its existence with honour.

History stands witness to the fact that whenever, as a result of assertion in historical moments, it has come into worldly power, Sikhism has exercised its temporal privileges for the interests of all the environmental elements in accordance with

its pristine faith and doctrines. It stands to its credit that at no time in history has it tried to use forced conversions as a means of increasing its influence through numbers. For, the rule in Sikhism is that conversion must arise in the minds of the new adherents and should not be forced on them just because they are subject to physical pressure from Sikhs in dominant positions.

Even at the time of the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh, when his galvanising personality attracted many people to the fold of Sikhism, he refused to administer 'amrit', the baptismal vows, even to his well known and ardent followers. He must have doubted their capacity to keep the vows. There were even then people who went through the ceremony as a kind of environmental necessity but, under the strict code of behaviour, they fell apart and abjured the cause. Some of them redeemed their honour by being re-admitted to the fold after having demonstrated their capacity to suffer for the cause.

For this phenomenon of Sikhism, one has to understand the structure of the religion. The Gurus believed in strengthening the core of the faith. They valued the peripheral adherents as sympathisers and as a reservoir for the continuous fulfilment of the object for which Sikhism was conceived. In the peripheral environment also, there were several circles of gradation of the faith which received the powerful religious, moral, social and creative impulses for reinforcing the core as and when the necessity arose. Bhai Gurdas, the amanuensis of Guru Arjan for compiling the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the appointed authority for interpreting Sikh doctrines and practices, has stated that the highest form of Sikhism is Gurmukh; the next is Sanmukh; then Gursikh and finally Gharbazar (domestic) Sikh.

Guru Gobind Singh created an exclusive form of Sikhism in administering baptism to the Sikhs, making it a condition that it should be partaken only by adults who could keep the vows. This does not in any way cut away from the moral stature of Bhai Gurdas. It

was a means, used by Guru Gobind Singh, for reinforcing the sagging spirit of the Sikhs to survive against the onslaughts both of Brahmanism and the Mughal Kings, mostly instigated by the former.

As the influence of Sikhism broadened, the core remained intact but the peripheral devotion decreased as the numbers increased. Time and again, the peripheral Sikhs have risen to the occasion under the influence of the core and demonstrated that martyrs can be made from ordinary clay. This remains a distinctive capacity of Sikhism from time to time, earning in good measure the sobriquet of Puran Singh, the great Sikh and Punjabi writer, that the Sikhs are a 'spirit born people.' This spirit has been infused by the ten Gurus, the numerous martyrs in the cause and many modern day happenings which called for self-sacrifice, as well as stubborn and dynamic resistance to pressures for changing the basic nature of Sikh religion and its practices. Some of the past instances, which spearheaded the assertion of the pristine values of Sikhism, may be recounted.

The first onslaught on Sikhism was in Guru Arjan's time after he had compiled the *Guru Granth* and given shape to the work of his predecessors in asserting that Sikhism was a distinct path, quite different from Hinduism and Islam. This was analytically supported by Bhai Gurdas in his *Vars* (Odes) on Sikhism in which he claimed, and quite correctly, that Sikhism was distinct from all the known religions of the world. In two significant stanzas he brought out the difference between Hinduism and Islam with Sikhism.

The creation of a new religious doctrine and practices, and the fact of its drawing adherents both from Islam and Hinduism, enraged the then Mughal King, Jehangir, who, at the instigation of his Brahmanic courtiers from Lahore, inflicted the most tyrannical tortures on the Guru. However, the Guru declared in a memorable verse that he had irrevocably separated from both Hindus and Muslims. This was only on the religious plane as he conti-

nued to have intimate social relations with Muslims (Hazarat Miranmir was invited to lay the foundation stone of Harmandir Sahib—now the Golden Temple) and his grandson, Guru Tegh Bahadur, laid down his life for the symbolism of Brahmanism which he and his predecessors had completely repudiated.

It is the core again that gave new direction to the Sikh faith. Its central personalities were the young Guru Hargobind and his veteran advisers, Baba Buddah and Bhai Gurdas. The conceptualisation of the *Khalsa* began, though incipiently, at that time. The establishment of the Akal Takhat as the temporal authority for Sikhism was a revolutionary step which sustained Sikhs during the days of their guerilla warfare both with the later Mughals and the invading Afghans in the eighteenth century.

The other instance is the vigorous reaction of the young Guru Gobind Singh to the death of his father at the hands of the Mughal King, Aurangzeb. The creation of the Khalsa was an epoch making event which has left an indelible impress on the history of this country. Guru Gobind Singh initiated a cadre of followers, under oath and initiation ceremonies, which dominated north western India for over a century, combating the later tyrannical Mughals and Afghans.

The Brahmanical Hindus also took active part in suppressing Sikhism and its practices. The heaviest toll of Sikhs was taken by Dewan Lakhpat Rai in the battle of Ghallughara which left hardly 5,000 Sikhs alive in the country. Dewan Lakhpat Rai had set up barriers preventing Sikhs from going to Harmandir Sahib. In this phase the core was very active and Sikhs rose to great heights both in offering individual and group sacrifices and in inflicting dire wounds on the enemy.

The fall of the later Mughals and invading Afghans resulted in a somewhat sequestered peace in which the common link was the annual strategy planning session at the Akal Takhat. The Divine Resolutions passed there were the sus-

taining factor for the whole year. These kept sequestered Sikhs, more or less, on the same wavelength.

The rise of Ranjit Singh ended this system. He consolidated the entire temporal and political power within himself allowing the Akal Takhat to exercise the religious power to which he willingly submitted himself. Though, from the pristine values of Sikhism, Ranjit Singh's reign was a set-back to Sikhism as the grandeur of State ceremonial was in direct contrast to the simple Sikh traditions, he at least set the example of ruling by the consent of all the various religions in his kingdom.

The same catholic outlook governed the cis-Sutlej Rajas and Maharajas whose reign ended with the formation of Pepsu which later merged into the present Punjab. All prominent Sikh historians, particularly Teja Singh and Harbans Singh, consider that Sikhism slid back into Brahmanism under the influence of the lavish court; also with the infiltration of the Brahmanistic element into Sikhism. They were outwardly Sikh but with no commitment to Sikhism's pristine values.

The scene enacted at the time of Ranjit Singh's last illness was, to say the least, the complete antithesis of the directions of the Gurus — what with *sankalps* and pseudo-religious gimmicks to gain a further lease of life for the Maharaja. He was mostly in a coma and the whole show was stage-managed by Raja Dhian Singh and Jamadar Khushal Singh, both adventurers in the court of the Maharaja without any commitment to Sikhism as later events conclusively demonstrated:

Again, the core asserted itself and the foundations of the Singh Sabha reformation were laid in 1873 which played a great part in bringing Sikhism back to its pristine values, particularly after the great divide with the Hindu element of the eclectic Arya Samaj in the Punjab. It is not necessary to go into the sordid history of the break up of the combined movement of the Arya Samaj and the walk out of the Sikh element. It might suffice

to quote Harbans Singh, the great sayant and historian of modern times, who is now editing the Sikh Encyclopaedia, on the reasons for the assertion of the core of Sikhism and its reverberations through the peripheral Sikhs which spread like wild fire.

Here is what he says: 'What touched Sikhism to its very roots and made it a living force once again was the Singh Sabha reformation. Unlike other Indian reform movements of the period which were the creation of outstanding individual leaders, the *Singh Sabha* was a mass upsurge. There were three factors mainly responsible for it—an awareness born of the general awakening that Sikhism as commonly practised was a corruption of what it originally was, a reaction to what was happening in the neighbourly religious traditions and defensiveness generated by Christian proselytisation and the *odium theologicum* started by some Hindu critics.' The last reason was the most outrageous as it resulted in the crude denigration of *Guru Granth Sahib* by Gurū Datt in an open assembly and, later, of the conversion of the Rahitiyas — Sikh weavers — to the Hindu Arya Samaj fold by cutting their hair and beards in an open forum.

Simultaneously, or as the natural offshoot of the Singh Sabha movement, the Akali movement arose for the restoration of Sikh Gurdawaras to their pristine form, namely, by discarding idol worship which had been concurrently introduced by Brahmanistic 'mahant' elements. The Gurdawaras were taken possession of while Sikhs fought against their enemies, by a traditional priestly class from amongst the Hindus. It took 120 years to get the Gurdawaras freed from their incubus. The sufferings undergone by the Akalis non-violently elicited the admiration of Madan Mohan Malaviya, C.F. Andrews and Mahatma Gandhi. Jawaharlal Nehru actually courted imprisonment at Jaitu morcha and spent some time in the notorious Nabha jail. It is again the core that asserted itself and through various acts of self-sacrifice aroused the peripheral Sikhs to rise to the occasion.

We now come virtually to the partition of the country. Clouds gathered for the Sikhs from many directions. March 1947 saw the annihilation of many villages, with loss of life and dishonour to women, in the Rawalpindi division. This was followed by very sad and now unmentionable events which did no credit to any civilised norm. Sikhs were the principal targets and yet were being wooed by Jinnah's Pakistan. For a while, the Sikhs were bewildered. Then their spleen was activated. They hit back, decided to throw in their lot with India for which many promises were made by national leaders regarding their life in the new republic, decided to ignore the call of Jawaharlal and Patel to stick to Pakistan and see the community severed into two, walked out of Pakistan in swarms from their well tended and prosperous canal colonies which they had husbanded with great labour and sacrifice, and made preparations for a new life in a new environment.

Having been at that time in close contact with senior political circles, their influx into India was by no means welcome; it was like a big fly in the ointment of the independent existence of the country. Instead of looking forward to planning for prosperity, the national leaders had to rehabilitate Hindu and Sikh emigrants who were suddenly destitute, deprived of their more than ordinary standard of living to which they were used. Then followed a wonderful patch in India's new history. Both Hindus and Sikh emigrants quietly created gold virtually out of nothing. However, the struggle for power had also begun in the Punjab between the two communities of emigrants — an internecine affair which persists until today.

The points of dispute were such as should shame the two communities, namely, language and educational policies. These were mere camouflage for supremacy in the political field by each at the cost of the other. Many irrational resolutions were passed by both, of which the most astounding was the declaration of Hindu Punjabis in favour of Hindi as a mother tongue — a blatantly political gimmick for

checkmating the Punjabi speaking State (linguistic States were the declared policy of the Indian National Congress) whenever the issue was considered. The two communities were ranged on opposite sides with the Indian National Congress perched as a sort of mother monkey among erring cats.

The Indian National Congress won the first round by keeping the two communities fighting. By collaring a segment of Sikhs traditionally of that persuasion and some stragglers from the Akali party for a share in political office, it was able to obtain a majority to form an administration in the Punjab. The majority of Sikhs placed their confidence in the Akali party. Here was a classic case of dividing the joint electorate into blatant and irrational separate electorates because 75 per cent of the Sikhs vote for the Akalis and 75 per cent of the Hindus for the Congress party or any party, such as the Janata in 1977, in power at the Centre.

All this stems from the inability of the Indian National Congress to win the support of the Sikh electorate. The nexus between Punjab Hindus and the Indian National Congress or the party in power in the Centre is intended to make the Sikhs understand that they have to face Hinduism at the national level and not only in Punjab.

The gamut of confrontation between Hindus and Sikhs (the majority of them) has run through many vicissitudes, each more ridiculous than the preceding one. The language, the educational policies, the issue of the Punjabi speaking State and now the economic issues of division of water and territorial disputes with Haryana and Rajasthan, all have aggregated to create a vicious syndrome of Hindu-Sikh tensions. The greater the attempt to denigrate the Akalis as a communal party, the more firm is the commitment of the majority of Sikhs to them. What started as a sort of religious confrontation on language has now assumed the character of a politico-religio-economic conflict.

Sikhs fail to understand why Punjabi Hindus denounce them for

claiming Punjabi speaking areas for the State or for the Akalis demanding a rational juridical division — as opposed to a political solution for winning elections in other States — of waters of the rivers to which Punjab is a riparian territory. If the waters have to be distributed according to overall national interest, let there be a judicial consideration of that not only in this case but also for other inter-State river systems. Let one law of the land apply in all circumstances.

Legal and constitutional rights do not change in the national interest. The latter is protected by motivating those who have the constitutional rights. No State will want water to inundate its territories and create salinity over its productive land. It will gladly share its bounties with others but there is no disposition to motivate people; the law is made by the executive will and mundane electoral advantages as if this patrimony would be taken along after one ceased to exist. Meanwhile, straightforward economic conflicts become religio-political conflicts with survival as the creative instinct of those who cannot muster large numbers in the peculiar kind of democracy we have.

Distrust of the Akali party has virtually become a suspicion of the Sikhs as a whole, as the latter have refused to jettison the Akalis despite all the stratagems used by government in general and the Hindus of Punjab in particular, supported as they are by a breed of Sikhs congenitally opposed to anything that the Akalis do whether it is rational or irrational. This is because any other course would threaten their closely held privileges in the political field.

The campaign against the Akalis has taken strange courses. Their strength is measured by their hold on the gurdawaras. So the logical solution is to divest the Akalis, by hook or by crook, of the gurdawaras and their funds. These were to be captured by organising Congress Sikhs into a religious offshoot for fighting gurdwara elections. When this gimmick failed, surreptitious attempts were made by suborning

elected members, particularly of the Delhi Gurdwara Committee. It is never realised that all interference, overt or covert, with gurdawaras merely strengthens the Akalis' hold on the Sikhs, including the Sikh intelligentsia. Even if all the gurdawaras are escheat to government legally or illegally, Akalis can still create the wherewithal to obtain funds from Sikhs through makeshift shrines. After all, bricks and mortar do not make gurdawaras but the spirit underlying their establishment does.

If the Sikh masses want the Akalis to be out of the gurdawaras and funding is the only attraction for the former, they can merely make the standard offering of five paise or even less and reduce gurdwara funds to one tenth of the corpus they are today. Harmandir Sahib was captured by the Moghuls and used as an entertainment arena for months. Sikhism did not falter because Harmandir Sahib was in the possession of a vicious governor of the Mughals. When the gurdawaras were incommunicado, being in possession of people who denigrated their sanctity, Sikhism did not falter.

After the gurdawaras, there is the threat that if Punjab Sikhs have grievances, their co-religionists in other places will suffer. This is not civilised to say the least; this threat of vicarious punishment and thwarting or choking of grievances of one set of people for fear of injury to the others. If the cause is just or the Akalis are articulating the grievances of the Punjabi Sikh masses, this kind of threat will not wash as it did not with the Sikhs who fought the Moghuls or the British. These are childish efforts at hitting below the belt.

Simultaneously, the Sikhs have to face the problem of a world-wide dissemination of their creed and the establishment of *sangats* in far off lands. They have to work out the problem of creating a nexus with them through a maze of diplomatic procedures with which they are not familiar. Any move of either side, in the present atmosphere of distrust of the majority of Sikhs, becomes a matter of suspicion. Gov-

ernment has never looked at these problems with sympathy but only as a duty thrust upon it ! There is the further complication of divergent sects of which the Nirankaris have made a direct assault on Sikhism and created bad blood amongst the followers. There is no doubt that all the divergent sects had the active sympathy of government which tried to drive a wedge into Akali territory to some extent, and to wean Sikhs away from it.

These sects are also important vote banks. A daylight case of a serious conflict resulting in a dozen deaths has been put under the bushel, so to say. No fresh investigations have been undertaken and no fresh *challan* put in because of political reasons against one party or the other. Those killed belonged to the Majha area where the spirit of revenge remains active, as the Punjabi proverb says, for seven generations. Certain tendencies have been activated among certain Sikhs which, to say the least, are not good for anyone—not even for the Sikhs.

To cap it all, the proportion of Sikhs has been reduced among the armed forces. While merit is stressed everywhere, the army has been handed over to the States. It may have justification, for all human action can be justified, but Sikhs have a grievance. Further, Punjab has been drained of large amounts of its earnings (to which Sikhs contribute the major share) but no central investment in industries has been made. The result is that the rural side has been drained of the young going to the Middle East and elsewhere while the Punjab farmer depends on imported labour.

The very structure of the prosperity of the rural side depends on imported inputs. The economy can collapse at any time in critical circumstances. It is already moribund with a structured, ill-fitted and ill-designed industry (whatever the praise showered on the ingenuity of the Punjabi, including Sikhs). Industry is being denied to Punjab rural areas as they are commanded by the defence sector but the sons of the soil policies elsewhere keep

the Sikhs out of employment though in theory there is no bar to movement and settlement in this country. What is happening in Assam is a warning if narrow sentiments are ignored.

The Sikhs are therefore in a predicament at the moment. They recognise the threat of overwhelming numbers. They also know that the Hindus of Punjab have made every effort to absorb them. Though they have failed so far, they are now at the game of inciting Hindus elsewhere. Hinduism is still predominantly Brahmanism. It is narrow and circumscribed in many concentric circles. In fact, if there is need to inculcate secular attitudes, the first to be tackled should be Hinduism itself. It is no use blaming the minorities if the major constituent of the democratic vote is itself a prisoner of chauvinistic sentiments and anti-diluvian practices which smack of more religiosity than even decadent Islam, Christianity or Sikhism.

The Constitution is a step forward in words but is many steps backward in actual implementation as elections have so far never been won on the basis of secularism but on caste and creed. With the RSS sitting astride every religion and the Indian National Congress being beset with regional forces and caste induced votes, there is no doubt that Sikhism has to ensure that it survives in its pristine form. Therefore, despite the weaknesses that have crept into it, the core is active again. Instead of going down amidst the tangled web of politico-religio-economic difficulties Sikhism is also looking ahead. It must survive for then alone will it be of use to the nation.

On the other side, the thinking in the Hindu camp is that if Sikhism ceases to exist and becomes a part of the great mass of Hinduism, nationalism will gain. This confrontation is on, at least with Punjab Hindus who are wanting to gain the sympathies of Hindus in the wider sense, and it is a fact of life at present. These circumstances do contain the seeds of revivalism. What direction the movement will take is difficult to guess.

Reason arrested?

SATISH SABERWAL

TO seek to understand revivalism — that is, strident, resurgent assertions in such terms as 'We are Hindus (or Muslims or Sikhs)' — is to ask: what are the problems in their life situations to which our countrymen find answers in these identities? The phenomenon spans the entire subcontinent — Kerala, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Punjab, Kashmir...; and any student of societies would know that such wide-ranging phenomena have their origins not in the cussedness of this man or that woman but rather in the depths of historically created social structures which enclose those life situations.

That screen of history in our case has to stretch not merely over our own tangled past but also over that of Europe, for we have taken over a great many of their inventions — technologies, but also economic, political and other institutional forms — and these have emerged out of *their* historical experience. To comprehend such complex ground in a few pages, it is commonly necessary to block out the incidental detail and to concentrate, instead, on core processes. If the discussion seems consequently to be excessively terse, I shall provide leads for anyone wishing to follow up the issues.

The following argument has three parts. First, I note that society in India used to be cellular in the main, enclosing nearly everyone in relatively small, local caste segments or analogues thereof. Of the changes occurring under colonial auspices (and later) — part institutional, part technical — one important facet was a dramatic expansion of scale: *more* people began to move, *more often*, over *longer* distances, with every passing decade — as the railways and other communications expanded. Then I shall examine the bases of religious belief and of religious identities, an area which is

much less mysterious than it used to be even a generation ago. Finally, I shall ask: why are those caught in this expansion-of-social-scale often impelled towards intensified religious identities, belying the simple links often posited between 'modernization' and 'secularism'?

Let me begin with the obvious. Village India — if you leave out the hill areas of the Northeast, Chhotanagpur, and the like — used to be, and largely continues to be organised in terms of the caste system: it was a vast cellular social universe (which has accommodated Sikhs, Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians too with equal ease). If you lived in a village, your intimate relationships were with kin and castemates; there were intercaste relationships as part of organising agricultural production; and then a variety of rather stereotyped links within the village and beyond to the market, to kin-by-marriage, and perhaps to one or more pilgrimage centres. An occasional renouncer from the village might join the *sadhus*; an occasional adventurer might link up with a royal army, entering the wider universe of imperial armies, of officialdom, and of merchants and transporters engaged in long-distance commerce; but most people, most of the time, used to live in the relative security and the confinement of a local, small-scale, cellular social universe.

That adventurer apart, if you lived in that village even five or six generations ago, you grew up into the rather closed world of the local community; a visit by an official was seldom good news, and various stratagems would be employed to avoid contact with him. Excepting the land revenue due, village affairs were village business and within it, equally, caste affairs were ordinarily the business of that caste alone. One learned to cope with a social milieu in which there were changes flowing

from marriages and deaths and births, the agricultural cycle, and the vagaries of weather and of officials and armies; but it all fluctuated around familiar, long-established patterns of living. Villagers and the outside world, such as there was of it in the vicinity, for the most part left each other alone.

To be sure there was that wider social universe beyond the village, too, with its regional political structures — Vijayanagar, Marathas, Ranjit Singh — and there had been the imperial Mughal State too. It has to be recognized though that those who built the regional States really were unable to invent or master the administrative and other devices needed for much larger political structures; and contemporary scholarly judgement suggests that their difficulties may have had a good deal to do with social logics associated with the caste system.¹

Akbar (and his immediate successors) did much better, but the core for the structures of their State came from outside India, and even that structure was tottering within a century of Akbar's death. We should not permit our overpowering defensive impulses to smother recognition of these elementary data concerning Indian society and history.

It was in this setting that the British could establish their dominion in India. Everyone would acknowledge their superior arms, and their discipline, too; but their success here is not to be seen in terms that would apply, say, to Babar, winning by force of an extraordinary band of intrepid horsemen. Certainly, by the time Cornwallis took over at the end of the 18th century, it is clear that governmental authority was being organised in a manner India had not had a taste of before: in short, it was a bureaucracy, with characteristics which Max Weber, the German sociolo-

1. See R.G. Fox, *Kin, Clan, Raja, and Rule*, University of California Press, 1971; and Henri Stern, 'Power in traditional India', in R.G. Fox, ed., *Realm and Region in Traditional India*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1977.

2. *Economy and Society*, Pt. 1, Chapter 3 (tr. G. Roth and C. Wittich), 1968, University of California Press.

gist, discussed at length early in this century.²

Bureaucratic administrative structures, in turn, are not to be seen as a sudden eruption. These were part of a comprehensive process which Weber recognised as rationalisation, that is, a pervasive, on-going re-organisation of human affairs, applying reason to human activities, to ascertaining the nature of physical and social realities (which leads into science), and to proposing what the future ought to be like (which leads into ethics on the one hand and technology on the other).

All this did not happen quickly. Its roots went back (1) to ancient Greek philosophy (5th and 4th century B.C.), (2) to various elements in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, and (3) to the ancient Romans who ran a far-flung dominion, while themselves organised initially as a republic (upto the first century B.C.) and later with emperors: their bequest to the western tradition included the use of formal legal codes as well as the use of bureaucratic organisations.

When the Roman empire collapsed finally in the 6th century A.D. it was the Roman Catholic church which kept alive not only the religious heritage of the West but also the thought of the Greeks — bringing Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle into its own corpus³ — as well as the Roman administrative practices — building these into the church organisation itself. The church was 'the main, frail aquaduct', says Perry Anderson, 'across which the cultural reservoirs of the Classical World ... passed to the new universe of feudal Europe ...'.⁴

These are complex issues which cannot be examined here adequately; I refer to them only to indicate that the institutions of 18th century Europe — which enabled them to establish dominion over us — were no flash-in-the-pan; these issued rather from long term developments which had had their ups and downs,

3. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* 1946, London, George Allen & Unwin.

4. Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, London, NLB, 1974, p. 131.

but which meant too the gradual spread of certain core disciplines; acting in public office in the general interest, not for private aggrandisement; a commitment to using reason in human affairs, including the resolution of disagreements and conflicts; a recognition of jurisdictional boundaries between institutions, initially those between the church and the State, but later acknowledged more widely; and so forth. Slow, cumulative tendencies were to prepare the ground over, say, two thousand years for the modern West to emerge, a process concerning which we in India have been curiously uncurious.

What were these disciplines good for? These made possible, among other things, the establishment of large-scale organisations which could in their home ground count on (1) virtual immunity from the use of arbitrary power and force by other agencies, including the State; (2) recourse to a relatively predictable, orderly legal system for resolution of disputes; and (3) general support for disciplining their own functionaries to ensure that they act for organizationally defined goals, and not use their positions for opportunistic private gain.⁵

The great European trading companies of the 17th century were part of this enlargement in organizational scale; and during the 19th century, they were able to reach even further, thanks to the technology of railways and other communications, not to mention the mushrooming industrialisation.

As this complex of organization plus technology was established in India, it meant a dramatic expansion of space, physical and social, within which people could travel and plan and establish social relationships. Only small fractions of the population did so initially, but for them it made a world of difference. The old confinement was being breached; so, too, though rather slowly, the old security of the established and the familiar. All this is part of that historical screen on

5. Clive, Hastings and their contemporaries in India indeed did not abjure private gain, but this detail may be bypassed in this context.

which we see the play of revivalism; but before turning to our principal question, we need to sketch something in about religious beliefs and identities.

On questions of religion, we in India tend to take basically three kinds of positions. First are the faithful, each persuaded of the ultimate truth of one's own scriptures and the ultimate reality of the particular rituals and symbols learnt on one's mother's knee. In the second view, matters religious are sensitive, these stir passions easily. One dare not provide spark for these ever-ready tinders, and so all religious contexts require all possible deference, whatever one's private views. The third position, sometimes held alongside the previous one, would dismiss all religious beliefs either as ignorant superstition or as cover for operators in search of political leverage.

Rare are attempts to take religious acts, experiences, beliefs and institutions as phenomena which are, like politics, production, kinship or whatever, amenable to empirical enquiry and understanding; as normal, recurrent elements in the human situation which answer human needs. I wish to sketch such a perspective in the next few pages.⁶

Several generations of students of human societies and of the human psyche have enquired into, and reflected over, the nature of religious experience and the bases of religious belief in a wide spectrum of societies, ranging from simple bands of hunters and gatherers to complex civilizations, bearers of world religions. This scholarship has been almost entirely western, but that is no reason for us either to accept it or to reject it blindly, without subjecting it to our own critical judgement. The habits of mind underlying the social sciences have been basically the same as those going into science and technology, allowing for the differences necessary to the different phenomenal fields.

Western technology has tended everywhere to disrupt established social patterns; and it is as part of

6. This sketch follows an earlier statement on 'Elements of communalism', *Mainstream*, March 21 and 28, 1981.

the West's attempt to cope with that disruption that sociology and related fields grew there. And if we take western technology avidly, we can ill afford to ignore the understandings of society, religion, and so forth that the West has reached in its attempt to cope with the disruption of its own social fabric by that technology.

Religion, in this view, is part of 'culture'⁷, which may be seen as the totality of the more or less changing conceptions concerning nature and society, self and others, past, present and future; conceptions which any functioning human group possesses, renews and lives by. *All such conceptions are man-made*, though most are inherited from one's own (or others') ancestors as part of a tradition. Our dependence on these conceptions is very great, for these make it possible for us to interpret our circumstances and to choose between alternate courses of action.

In any even moderately complex society, the cultural stock is enormously varied, and societies have evolved numerous devices for organising this variety. These days this is done consciously — in dictionaries, libraries, specialised professions, and computers; formerly, somewhat similar ends were sought rather less deliberately. One common technique (conscious or unconscious) has been to highlight some core ideas regarding what reality is, and what it ought to be, and to claim or believe that these ideas are sacred, divinely inspired.

Taking this core as axiomatic, beyond question, then, other conceptions get fitted around it more or less deliberately. In the Hindu tradition, the ideas of ritual purity and pollution served to organise a great deal of the social order. Islam came to stress the importance of the *sunnah*, the beaten path of Islamic tradition, and expected its observance by every Muslim, by the entire *umma*, the entire community.⁸

7. Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture as Praxis*, 1973, London, Routledge, presents something of the complex formulations of the concepts which prevail today.

8. I owe my limited understanding of Islam to G.E. von Grunebaum, ed., *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilisation*, 1955,

Through time and cumulative experience, such key ideas come to be applied to a wide range of life situations: together these may be said to constitute a culture's integrative core.

Until the secularist growth of the last two or three centuries, this integrative core in the complex pre-modern societies invariably claimed transcendental — i.e., religious — origins. When initially promulgated, the early ideas of some of the great religious traditions arose in sharp intuitive insight into the prophet's own social milieu, showing for example how to re-order the framework of social relations so as to accommodate the changing structures of interests more adequately.⁹ In the prevailing struggle between competing sets of ideas, the evidence of a prophet's extraordinary experiences, possibly of the supernatural, in trance-like seizures, would give his message an edge, sometimes decisively.

Later generations would amplify and systematize the prophet's message, but certain core symbols — in Islam the prophet as the Messenger of God, his sayings and actions as the roots of Islamic law, the sacred core in the Meccan shrines, the unity of the *umma*, the religious community, guided by the *ulema*, the religious scholars — such symbols would run through and recognizably unify the inevitably vast diversities of the community of believers. When, say, the Hajj brought together Muslims from Djakarta and Rabat, or from Calicut and Agra, they would recognise in each other a certain sharing of religious sensibilities, a bond that made them brothers in faith. This bond would be sensed by their neighbours at home, too, who

University of Chicago Press, W. Montgomery-Watt, *Islam and the Integration of Society*, 1961, London, Routledge; Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed*, 1971, Penguin; and *Islam and Capitalism*, 1974, Penguin; and Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: religious development in Morocco and Indonesia*, 1968, New Haven, Yale University Press.

9. For the rise of Islam, both Rodinson, *op. cit.*, and Watt, *op. cit.*, write in these terms. For Buddha, likewise, D.D. Kosambi, *Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, 1965, London, Routledge, pp. 104-13.

only heard about the pilgrimage and, could not themselves make it.

This bond, we have to concede, is not commonly subjected to empirical judgements as to whether the believers share more of their overall tradition with each other than with the followers of another faith. The bond arises rather in faith, in the implicit acceptance of the symbolic order, which acts much of the time at more or less unconscious levels of experience: such elements as purity and pollution, the sanctity of the cow or the power of the Mother, the importance of conserving one's semen... these elements are suffused through and are expressed in numerous seemingly unconnected areas of belief and experience.¹⁰

Each element in the symbolic order acquires its meaning within a particular universe of the mind, which is also an experienced universe. This meaning is created by the ceremonial, by recurrent experiences, and it is confirmed by others during and outside these ceremonies and experiences. In a phrase, this experienced universe is also a moral order. Its meanings are not available immediately outside its own settings of symbols and experience; but, for a believer, these are often critical in intra-psychic integration: their effectiveness is the greater for their being unconscious.¹¹

The sense of community fostered in the religious traditions did, in

10. At this point one has to read the psychoanalysts: Eric Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth*, 1970, London, Faber & Faber; Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World*, 1978, Delhi, OUP; and J. Moussaieff Masson, *The Oceanic Feeling*, 1980, Dordrecht (Holland), D. Reidel. Cf. 'The more meanings a symbol signifies, the more ambiguous and flexible it becomes, the more intense the feelings it evokes, the greater its potency, and the more functions it achieves.' This from the anthropologist, Abner Cohen, *Two Dimensional Man*, 1974, London, Routledge, p. 32. See, also, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 1966, Penguin, esp. pp. 110ff.

11. My comments draw upon personal experience of Arya Samaj and of the Quakers in India and in North America. Fieldwork among the Embu of Central Kenya (1963-64) covered their beliefs concerning the supernatural too; but my interest in the anthropological understanding of religion was aroused only recently as I turned to the literature on Islam.

pre-modern societies, give direction to much of the prevailing life-style. Imprinted on the child's mind was the sanctity of worship — its place, its words, its gestures, its sounds, its smells, its personnel. Religious acts and functionaries attended many a critical episode in life: birth, illness, marriage, death. There were dietary injunctions: be a vegetarian, eat only *halal* meat, beef may or may not be prohibited. Before a child learned to ask questions, he or she would be immersed in religious beliefs, with their organizing symbols, as part of an established way of life, of the only proper way to become a man or a woman.

It would not have happened equally for everyone; but it did happen in families enough to set the temper in their social group. To one born into and surrounded by a faith, its shared experiences, meanings and gestures have the taken-for-granted quality which underlies social ease; and therefore nearly all marriages would have been made within the faith.

Areligious tradition, put otherwise, is or used to be like a compass, helping one chart a course through life. It used to be a sanctified manual, listing the do's and don'ts for coping with the universe.¹² Members of a multi-religious society, however, would work with different manuals, listing divergent codes for life. Where people lived by different manuals, one way to anticipate the other's intentions would have been to reckon with the other's manual, the other's religion.

Social unease could furthermore be obviated by signalling one's own manual, through various diacritical marks: clothing, hairstyle, facial marks, perhaps one's language and manners. Religiously rooted social identities would thus be established and be mutually acknowledged. Awareness of these socio-religious identities would help one constitute useful social maps in one's mind,

12. This is a deliberately utilitarian stance on religion. For a modern, anthropological attempt to comprehend the ineffable in religion, see Clifford Geertz, 'Religion as a cultural system', in M. Banton, ed., *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, 1966, London, Tavistock; and his *Islam Observed*, op. cit.

demarcating the social territory into sacred, friendly, neutral, hostile, etc., and these social maps remain much in use even when the latter-day secular understanding of nature and society, of life and death, and of one's inner world make one sceptical of one's received religious manual and its transcendental aura.

Religious grounding used to be, and often continues to be, important for identities which constitute the social maps for regulating public social relations; and it so happens that similarly grounded devices also provide the means for coping with and for organising the inner world.¹³ We need to note the connections in the latter direction too, however briefly.

While the exigencies of life are infinitely variable, some of the key themes in any society arise as its cultural resources and constraints are used for canalising instinctual impulses — including those of sexuality — and for coping with the trauma left over from childhood. The enormous importance of these devices for the individual psyche in India is being attested by the slowly growing psychoanalytic work on Indian cultural materials.¹⁴

These historically created devices — austerities, devotions, pilgrimages — are options available within a tradition; and just as many of the traumas and the instinctual difficulties arise in the ongoing functions and malfunctions of society, so too their bearers take to these devices selectively, recurrently. The point to note here is that many of these devices, for helping to create order within one's private self, are embedded intimately in the meanings and symbols associated with particular religious traditions and may commonly be employed only by the bearers of that tradition overall.

Major religious traditions are constituted, however, not merely of beliefs, symbols and rituals but also of vast social organisations: religious specialists, places of wor-

13. There is also the tiny minority able to live largely by the modern, secular understanding of these matters.

14. Kakar, *op. cit.*, Masson, *op. cit.*

ship, traditional schools, pilgrimage centres—and particular sets of ceremonies, recitations and the like associated with each of these.

In a world of small, often defensive communities, the religious specialist, itinerant or resident, with his literacy and wider connections and awareness of the sacred and sometimes secular literature, has been the man interpreting new situations, appealing to prior categories and symbols, and sometimes reminding his flock of ideas and connections they may have forgotten. Together, these specialists and their institutions provide vast inter-local socio-religious spreads, but there are few connections between these specialists *across* the religious boundaries.

Let us sum up the argument to this point. I have shown that most of us have emerged from social backgrounds which placed us within relatively small groups; and the structure of Indian society has been such that, in the pre-colonial period, we had great difficulty in sustaining political structures of scale larger than that of a region. It was the combination of organization and technology accompanying the colonial regime which made a sub-continental polity possible.

Secondly, I have depicted above the bases of religious belief and identity in our experience, the use of religious identities to organise one's social space, the play of religiously embedded mechanisms in the working of one's inner life and, finally, the separateness of the inter-local connections within the different religions. The statement refers not to a particular religious tradition but to such traditions generally; yet this is a model of a 'constant', steady situation. It remains to show why, out of this soil, religious identities should burst forth with particular intensity on some occasions. Let us now move to this task even though, in the space available, I can do no more than indicate the elements which have to go into the explanation.

First, while my statement has implied that religious traditions are intrinsically separative, in fact in

all functioning communities there necessarily is a good deal of mutual accommodation, interdependence and integration, too. Insofar as marriage and kinship have tended to be limited within religious (or even narrower) bounds,¹⁵ however, most of us—outside small metropolitan enclaves—have tended to grow up with unambiguous religious identities; *interreligious* ties may be economic, political or of personal friendship; but in most cases these ties tend to be secondary, likely to give way under stress when the (religiously enclosed) ties of kinship and the like may endure.

Second, recent years have seen a period of growing uncertainty, anxiety and sense of insecurity. Of this there have been many sources. To take only one, as the framework of planning is dismantled and even the pretence of socialism abandoned, 'free enterprise' capitalism gets its head, and the inevitable consequences in terms of the growing uncertainties of the market follow. These concern unemployment, inflation, market prices of what one buys or sells, and so forth. For nearly everyone in India, almost the only way to cope with personal anxieties is to turn to kin and family, and perhaps find solace in religious devotions.¹⁶

When personal anxieties are widespread, their discussion within one's social field searches for their source; and insofar as this social field be homogeneous in religious terms, a group is likely to judge that its difficulties arise in an identified social group other than one's own. Given the structure of Indian society, interpretation of social experience by laymen commonly uses such social categories.

15. Exceptionally in Punjab, at least within merchant and artisan castes, marriages between Hindus and Sikhs were common even two generations ago but these links have tended to weaken in recent decades.

16. Where emotional disturbance becomes severe, most of us can turn only to one of the many indigenous centres for healing the mentally disturbed, and these routines generally have clean religious linkages. See Sudhir Kakar, *Shamans, Mystics, and Doctors: a psychological inquiry into India and its healing traditions*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982.

Such judgements may be mis-taken, but these can be accurate too. If reports of communal riots from, say, Moradabad (1980), Meerut (1981), and Baroda (1981)—to name only the more recent—repeatedly show that large segments of police forces, sometimes supported by other parts of the administration, feel free to attack Muslims, the latter's sense of fear, and judgements concerning the source of the threat, would be wholly accurate. Or if, as Justice Krishna Iyer said, 'High Court judges were fighting on caste lines and there were judges who openly told him that they would maintain their communal bias,'¹⁷ one may well wonder how far our officialdom at large is currently observing the norms of impersonal neutrality without which a bureaucracy cannot maintain its credibility.

We have here the crux of the problem which returns us to an earlier theme. The whole apparatus of institutionalisation, represented by the judiciary, bureaucracy and so forth, was a by-product of colonial rule in India. We did not invent it. Its rise in the West, as I noted earlier, rested on certain core disciplines—commitment of public office to the common weal; not private gain; the application of reason in human affairs; abjuration from using power and force arbitrarily; and so forth. When such discipline cannot be maintained at the governmental core, the wider society and polity begins gradually to regress towards the situation that prevailed in India in the 18th century.

In one's search for security in such a situation, where the prerequisites of public life can be seen to be giving way, one is left increasingly to one's own devices; and, as of now, a great many seem to be pinning their faith on organizations which rest on religious identities. I think they are mistaken; for the passions of religious identities escalate each other's sense of insecurity and make the shared situation worse, not better. Yet, if I were limited to their repertoire of skills and understanding, perhaps I would do no different.

17. *Indian Express* (New Delhi), March 14, 1982, p. 1.

Books

THE RSS STORY by K.R. Malkani, Impex
India, New Delhi, 1980.

MALKANI'S attempt at a potted history of the RSS ends up as a rag-bag of anecdotes about the founding fathers of the RSS and its later evolution. Apart from what can only be called the naive sentiments of the author, the book not surprisingly gives a very partisan version of the stand of the RSS on various political issues such as the Khilafat Movement and the partition of India. The book is sprinkled with testimonials from all and sundry as well as reported conversations with 'famous' Indians, all of whom are said to be very enthusiastic about the RSS. Since Malkani does not quote any sources for these comments and views, it is difficult to check their authenticity and, for all one knows, the enthu-

siasm may be wishful thinking on the part of the author. The founders of the RSS are described in biographical terms. Among the more curious aspects is the constant appointment to leadership of Nagpur brahmans in the early stages. It would be worth investigating the role of the anti-brahman movement in Maharashtra which might have encouraged the reaction of the RSS.

The organisation of the RSS brings to mind the parallel of sects institutionalised on the basis of *ashramas*. The establishing of a permanent *sanghastan* in the midst of a forest carries overtones of the *ashrama* as does the holding of functions to collect contributions which are referred to as *guru-dakshina*. There is an emphasis on celibacy, on total loyalty to the organisation and a carefully graded hierarchy of office-bearers with unquestioning command going down the ranks, from the *sar-sangha-chalak* or the

sar-senapati via various levels to the lesser *mukhyā-shikshak* (chief instructor) and the *svayamsevaks*, the rank and file members. The 'elder' appoints his successor who is accepted unflinchingly by the ranks. The cause becomes the purpose in life and is placed above everything else. Psychologically, this nurtures the need arising in many people during periods of change to be enclosed in a womb-like structure which seemingly protects them against the world. Such organisations can breed strange psychologies.

The ritual of the organisation is clearly based on militancy: the daily drills through which the organisation inducts young people into its *shishu sangham* (youth wing); the *shastra-puja* or worship of archaic weapons such as the sword and the spear, not to mention paintings of warriors such as Chatrapati Shivaji clad in full armour; the wearing of a uniform with its characteristic 'half-pant'; and the special RSS salute. Significantly, this ritual was put together in the 1930s when similar organisations in other parts of the world were evolving parallel rituals. The *charcha* or conversation between the instructors and the members of the RSS is part of the daily drill and is often in effect a catechism encapsulating the doctrine. It is at these sessions that the ideology is impressed upon young members in the form of a strongly Hindu interpretation of the past. The great heroes are Rama and Krishna as the establishers of Hindu *dharma* and Rana Pratap and Shivaji as defenders of the Hindu *dharma* against the Muslims. A strange pot-pourri of what is called 'historical facts' goes into the chapter of the book entitled, 'History is philosophy'!

The establishing of the RSS is described as emanating from two objectives — that the Hindu must be united to be able to stand up to Muslims and that the Hindu must be radicalised to hasten Britain's withdrawal from India (p. 14): radicalisation is a curious word for what was essentially militarisation. This was the formula of a Hindu communal nationalism and still persists in the RSS. The RSS prayer in Hindi and Marathi draws on an earlier Arya Samaj prayer, thus indicating its antecedents.

There are some passages in the book which inevitably bring to mind some of the accusations made against the celibate character of such organisations. We are told that Swami Akhandananda, 'one day fondling the rich lock of hair on his disciple's head' made him vow that he would never cut his hair and Golwalkar therefore refrained from cutting his hair (p. 41).

All organisations require funds and the basic question of where the finances come from for the RSS remains unanswered. One wonders how the Indore Sakha celebrated the 26th January, 1950 by feasting the thousands of poor in the city, (p. 60), or how the RSS has always been quick to build houses for those hit by cyclones and bring food to famine stricken areas. The efficiency of the organisation apart, all this still requires money and the RSS

is secretive about its financial sources. Curiously, this aspect has never been investigated although it would reveal various political linkages if it were enquired into properly.

In presenting the facade of a semi-religious sect with overtly cultural symbols, no matter how militant, the essentially political role of the RSS tends to get hidden. The book inadvertently hints at this role but does not analyse it. Since Malkani is prominent as both a senior member of the RSS and its public relations man, one can assume that the general lack of any intellectual spine in the RSS is what accounts for the poverty of thought in this book. The RSS clearly has to leave it to others outside the movement to make any worthwhile analysis of what its role in recent Indian history has been. It is clear that after its more direct intervention in Indian politics in the late 1970s, such an analysis is necessary.

Seminarist

CASTE SYSTEM, Myths, Reality, Challenge by Sachchidanand Sinha.. Intellectual Publishing House, 1982.

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA: His Life and Causes by J.E.T. Jordens. Oxford Publishing House, 1981.

SINHA'S work, coming after several books on related topics, is a refreshing piece of good academics. Although textbookish in approach, the original work does not get lost in the myriad authorities that he draws upon. Coming, too, at a time when the country is facing a distinct social crisis, what with the religious fanaticism of dominant groups which have culminated in the politics of religion, the book serves as a helpful guide to any student of social dynamics. As Sinha notes in the preface, 'the study started as an attempt to understand the causes of social strife going on in the country...the belief that they were a passing phase has been belied by their persistence. An attempt has therefore been made to go to the root of the problem...they are viewed as part of a general tendency towards parochialism and group conflicts all over the world.' The politics of apartheid has also been dealt with.

In his six chapters, Sinha adopts an historical approach and his analysis draws significantly from the works of Dumont and others. Significantly, in the third chapter, 'Caste: Pride and Prejudice', he analyses the misconceptions about the reality of the caste system; this forms the backbone of the work. Subsequent chapters deal with the concept of caste as a composite system, both in the national and international perspective. Sinha ends his analysis with a gloomy prediction, '...the caste system has become a major factor working towards the disintegration of society.' And, quite rightly, he does not attempt to offer solutions to this intricate problem,

Although a brilliant piece of academic work, Sinha fails on several grounds. He has written the book in an historical analytical framework and his dismissal of the Marxian interpretation as being too 'mechanical', lacks sufficient justification. Sinha also shies away from examining the inevitable fallout of the caste heritage — politics. The analysis should have at least included the political dynamics of his home State—Bihar. Instead, Sinha prefers to discuss it in a vague, general fashion in his concluding chapter. Moreover, Sinha has omitted totally the analysis of the 'crystallization' of the caste system that has characterised Independent India in spite of increasing education and egalitarianism—and what the future holds in this respect. Nevertheless, the book, written in an extremely lucid style, makes interesting reading.

Jorden's book, as the title suggests, is a biographical account of the most eminent leader of the Arya Samaj, Swami Shraddhanand, (after Dayanand). However, the book is not to be taken merely as a biography but rather as a continuation of Jorden's study of the Arya Samaj. Jorden has based his study on various scattered sources (which perhaps justifies the 27 odd pages of notes, references and biography) and of course the Swami's own copious writings; and as the dust jacket rightly notes, Jorden 'has drawn a vivid and finely chiselled portrait of Shraddhanand.' Unfortunately, while in a work of this nature glorification is essentially inevitable, Jorden displays a single minded devotion that borders on fanaticism and this robs the work of the objectiveness that is essential in any analysis of a social system. But, on the whole, the book with its personal style and 11 plates is good reading.

Ajit Prasad

INDIAN NATIONALISM : An Historical Analysis
by R. Suntharalingam. Vikas Publishing House,
1983.

INDIAN nationalism is a widely studied, widely interpreted and widely misunderstood subject. At a time when fissiparous tendencies are gaining importance in the country, the need to examine the roots of Indian nationalism remains as important as ever before. Increasingly, the evidence of everyday happenings leads one to question whether Indians are truly a nation and if they are, what is it that has bound them in the past and what can keep them together in the future. Consequently, to raise the question of Indian nationalism is not an empty exercise in semantics but rather a relevant reconstruction of useful guide-posts from history. Suntharalingam's historical analysis of Indian nationalism traces the story from the 19th century until 1947 in a narrative format that is interrupted only to examine controversial issues that worry scholars of the subject.

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The author traces the various approaches to Indian nationalism beginning with Besant and the romantic school. Besant's belief that the beginnings

of national consciousness are deeply embedded in India's ancient past, notably the civilisation nurtured by the Aryans, is criticised on the failure to make a distinction between ethno-centrism and nationalism. M.N. Roy and his school of historical materialism which argues that Indian capitalism had launched 'nationalism' to curtail British power is shown to be a little stronger.

However, reducing a complex movement into the straight jacket of Marxist class struggle denies causal significance to non-economic factors. McCully, with his theory of the educated class, conceived English education as the only agency through which nationalism entered India. Suntharalingam, however, finds that this approach overlooks the economic factors which Roy had been pre-occupied with and this lack of integration is the weakness in McCully's approach. Anil Seal's more recent thesis traces Indian nationalism as part of a common nationalist movement manifested the world over. This approach too is found wanting on grounds of inadequate integration into the social and economic fabric of the sub-continent.

Suntharalingam himself sees the roots of Indian nationalism in the recognition by the intelligentsia that India was a nation and that its people, as nationals, should be accorded the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This was because the educated, who were an all-India category sharing common attitudes and ideals, had widened their political horizon by forging linkages which cut across class and provincial boundaries. Such a movement — which Suntharalingam traces through an historical evaluation of the Indian National Congress, the role of Gandhi and the role of Muslims — not only ushered in a new age in India but resulted in the emergence of an independent nation.

One particularly puzzling aspect of the nationalist movement that Suntharalingam studies in some detail are the events related to partition. By a painfully detailed narration of the events immediately preceding partition, the author seeks to use historical evidence to reveal aspects of the nationalist movement in the pre-independence period that resulted in the contradiction of partition. A detailed description of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement and ideological conflicts within the Congress between 1927-39 illustrate the nascent nationalism that enveloped all political activity during the pre-independence years.

Suntharalingam's book is an exhaustive study of his subject and in sheer scholarship, perhaps, buries the more salient points that a scholar of his mettle could impart. The book may be a gold mine for serious students of Indian nationalism; it is questionable whether a mere detailing of tediously repetitive historical evidence need have been embarked upon. If anything, Suntharalingam's attempt to ensure authenticity falters on grounds of being far too detailed. This, however, is only a deterrent for the reader in search of quick answers to the origins of

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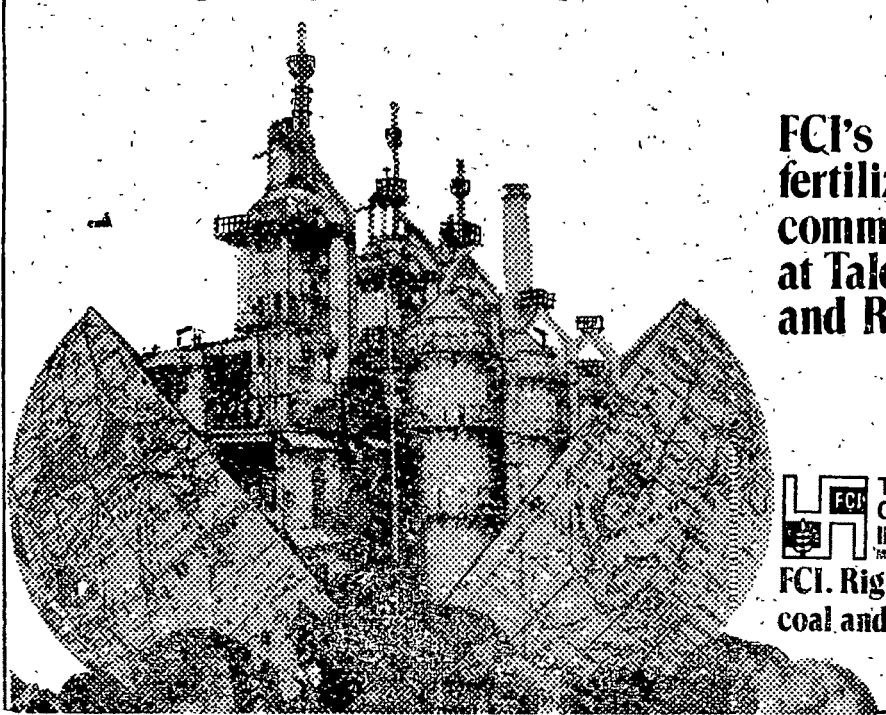
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Indian nationalism. Perhaps the more lasting message that the author leaves behind is that Indian nationalism is a phenomenon that is far too complex for easy explanations. A wide range of factors have created this uneasy child of history and only careful nurturing by national leaders in the future will ensure that this fledgling will not go astray.

Dilip Cherian

SECULARISATION IN THE U.S.S.R. by Shams-ud-din. Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1982.

THE conflicts between the *mullah* and the commissar are, no doubt, of considerable interest to students of ideological systems. Being a religion of recent origin, Islam retains some of its nascent vigour. But, both Marx and Engels were, because they basically concentrated on European economic systems, more concerned with Christianity. They saw it as a religion of an advanced economic order. 'And for a society based upon the production of commodities', Marx wrote in *Capital* (Vol. I), 'in which the producers in general enter into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values, whereby they reduce their individual labour into standardised homogenous human labour — for such a society, Christianity with its *cultus* of abstract man...is the most fitting form of religion.' The responses of this religion to changing socio-economic environs is a persistent stream in Marx and Engels' studies on religion as an element of capitalist ideology.

Islam did not receive any such elaborate treatment at the hands of both of them. There were no studies on Islam by them similar to Engels' *Bruno Bauer and Early Christianity* on the origin of the religion in the sunset hours of the Roman Empire, or Marx's studies on laterday Lutheranism in the *Peasant War in Germany*. In fact, Islam caught the serious attention of both of them only in the summer of 1853, when they were in England. Engels wrote to Marx that 'Mohammed's religious revolution, like every religious movement was formally a reaction, an alleged return to the old simple customs.' Marx elaborated the theme: 'Why does the history of the East appear as history of religions?' He agreed with Bernier, whose travels in the lands of the Great Mughal he had just read, that, in fact, there was no private property in the East.

Thus, the fathers of the Russian Revolution had practically no theoretical sources to draw upon in their anti-religious propaganda in the Islamic Central Asian Republics, other than the general principles of Marxism. The immediate question is how did the Soviet leaders succeed in conducting a revolution in a society with different property relations and a concomitant ideology? The answer could well be; no, they didn't, it was that very system which self-generated such a change due to the compulsions of its own internal contradictions. The other view is,

of course, that the neighbouring Russian Bolsheviks were successful in grafting, not necessarily painlessly, the communist system on such a society.

The second approach is adopted by Shams-ud-din in his study on the sovietisation of the Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan in the formative years of the Soviet society — 1917-1938.

Uneven responses of the nationalities which formed the U.S.S.R. to their own historic-economic circumstances were well understood by the post-Revolution Soviet leaders like Stalin. The image of a proletarian juggernaut flattening the varying cultural contours of the nation is not what Stalin projected in his speeches. He once told a group of college students that comrades who commit the deviation of not recognising the national question do not understand 'that the Soviet republics of the East themselves are not all alike, that some of them, for instance, Georgia and Armenia, are at the higher stage of national formation, while others, such as Chechnya and Kabarda, are at a lower stage of national formation.'

Ethnic and nationalist struggles for self-determination are significant forms of reaction to the central power. These rebellions are met or, more often than not, broken by the central power. So common are such happenings, that any struggle that raises the banner of the national question, as if by conditioned reflex, evokes sympathy in us. Persistence of such common events' after-images in the beholder's psyche forces him to fit totally dissimilar historical processes into this familiar structure.

Shams-ud-din's book seems to be such a gut-reaction. The drive for secularisation in Central Asia, according to the author, was primarily linked with the maintenance and consolidation of the Russian Empire in the shape of a proletarian multi-national State controlled by, of course, the Russian communists. The Tsarist conquest of Central Asia resulted in putting the Khanate of Kokand under the central yoke and reducing Bukhara and Khiva to vassal-States. Propelled by the territorial imperative of upkeeping the Tsarist geographical frontiers, the Soviet authorities, it is suggested, undertook an elaborate eastern venture to secularise Uzbekistan.

This is a time-tested form of Soviet-baiting and should gladden the hearts of all historical parallelists, the burden of whose song is that the Soviets are nothing but the Tsarist bear in a red coat. It is as if the genes of a nation shall go on replicating themselves, immutable even in the white-heat of paroxysmic events; like a revolution or two.

According to this study, the secularisation of Uzbekistan was to a great extent attributable to a demographic coincidence — the presence of a large network of Russian colonial settlements spread over strategic towns and places in Central Asia — something like the Russian communists' Troy horses. However, the documents reproduced in the book or

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those which could be consulted do not reveal any such conscious decision.

In fact, the Central Asian Islamic societies were so closed that they were impervious to outside propaganda. Lenin has stated at one place that 'such peoples as Kirghizes, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmen were still under the influence of their *Mullahs* ... Can we approach these peoples and tell them that we shall overthrow their exploiters? We cannot do this, because they are entirely subordinated to their *Mullahs*'.

Thus, in the Soviet schema, the process of change had to come from within. Sultan Galiev, who was the Deputy Commissioner in the Commissariat of Nationalities Affairs while Stalin was heading it, had instructed that 'only Communists of Muslim origin to carry on anti-religious propaganda among Muslims.'

Also, the historical evidence suggests that the Russian settlements in Central Asia were a microcosm of the Russian Society across the Urals — they had their own share of Mensheviks, revolutionaries, and the 'White Guards'.

The perceptive Soviet leaders were quick to realise the unique features of Islam. It is a young religion and more than any religion it provides for rules of political and civil behaviour. The Soviets had also recognised that a series of imperialist waves into the Muslim world, starting from the Crusades, had made the Muslims believe that they were oppressed, making the anti-religious propaganda all the more difficult.

It is against this social background that the secularisation in Uzbekistan took place. The uniqueness of Islam is that its *smrti* (the civil behaviour) is not divorced from the *sastras* (spiritual beliefs). This had made the superstructure less responsive to tremors in the base. The other religions, like Hinduism, where the *sastras* are kept more or less away from the *smrti* could well alchemise the economic changes into their social behaviour. The relative absence of this is both the strength and the weakness of Islam. Weakness, because the systems which do not bend easily may break after a critical pressure-point.

The communism practised by the Soviets immediately after the Revolution was also a young ideology. The combat between Islam and this must have been quite interesting. The strategies which the author looked for in the sovietisation of Uzbekistan were the same as the general policies of the Soviet Government — like the spread of education, collectivisation of property, social accounting etc. The same policies were, no doubt, practised *mutatis mutandis* in Uzbekistan. It is this '*mutatis mutandis*' we are interested in. In mistaking the general programme of communist action for specific-to-circumstance 'strategy', the author missed the bus completely.

N.S. Madhavan

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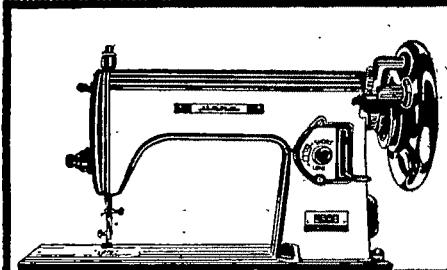
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Seminar Issues

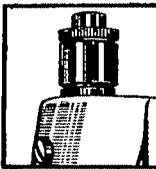
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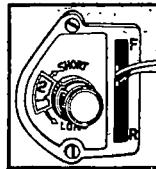
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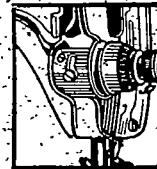
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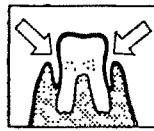
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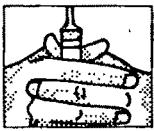
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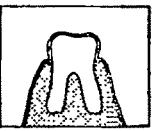
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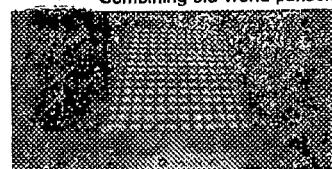
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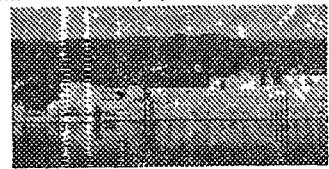


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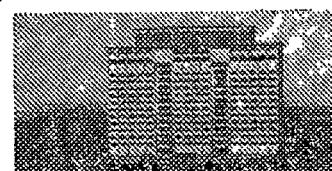
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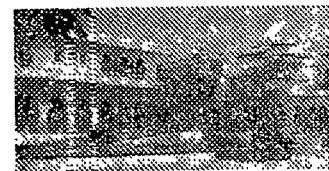
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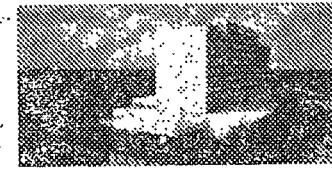
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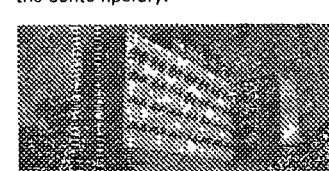
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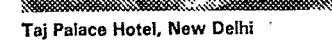
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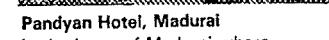
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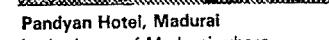
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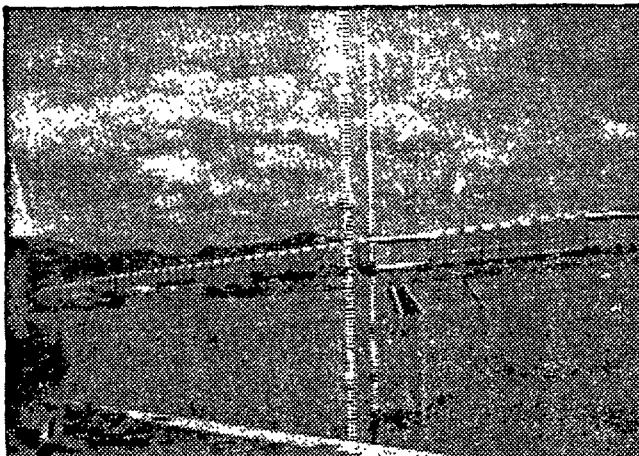
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BREAKDOWN

SALEM STEEL PROJECT

FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY



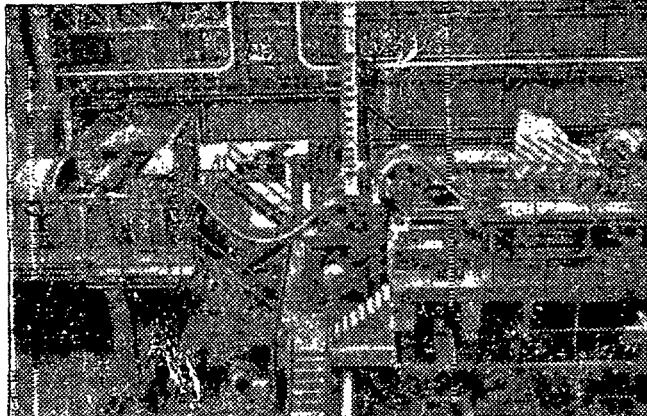
General view of the Cold Rolling Mill complex with the balancing reservoir in the foreground

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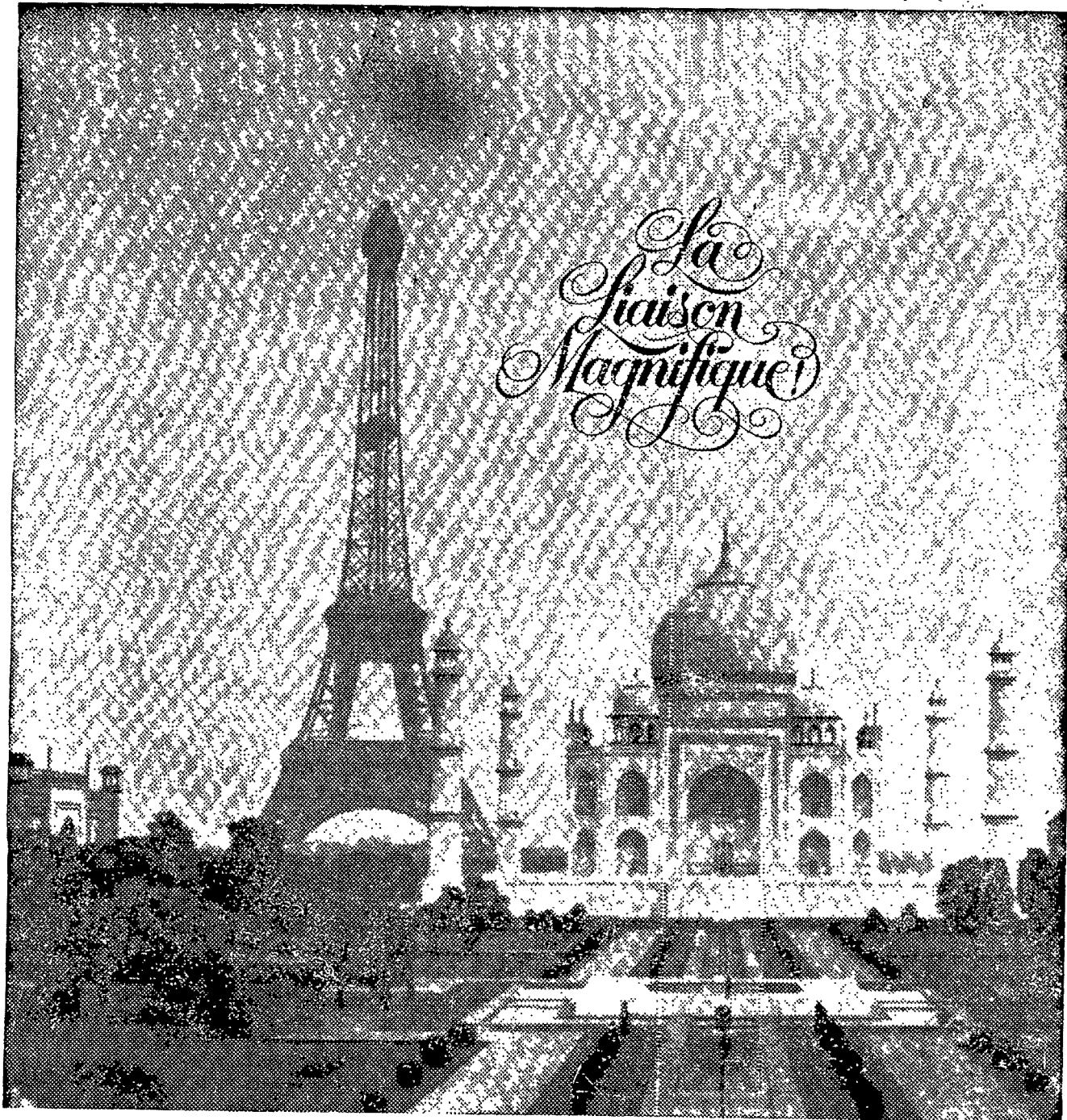


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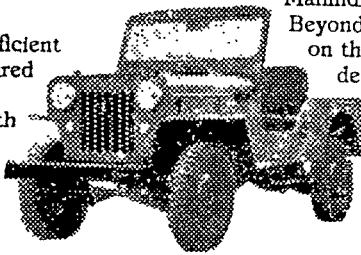


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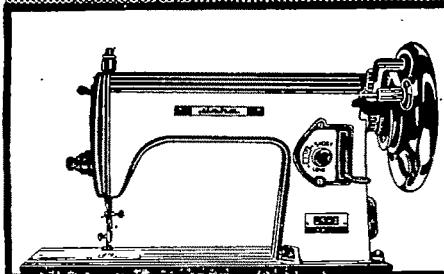
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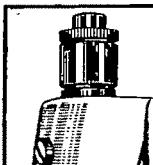
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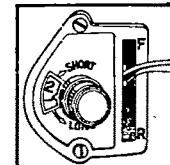
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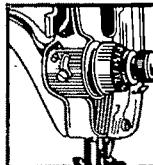
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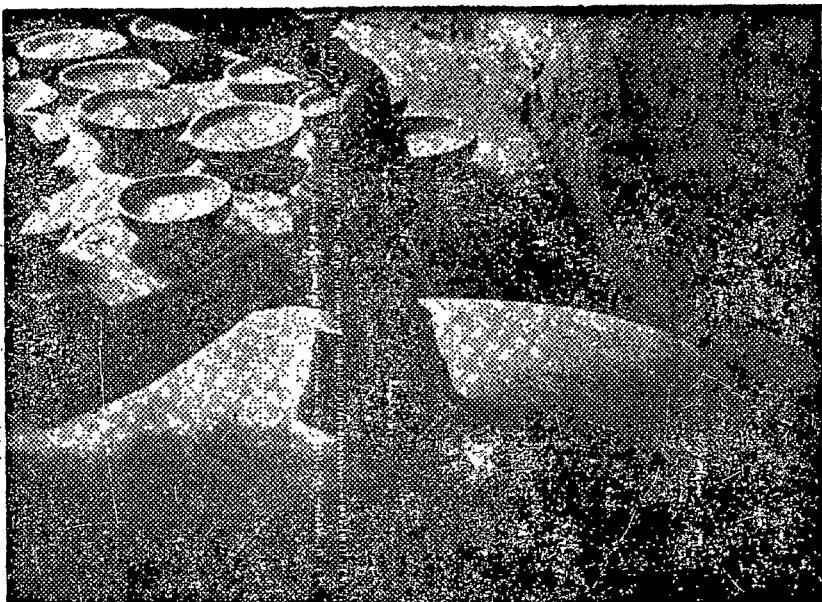


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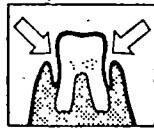
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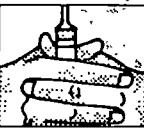
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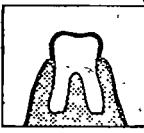
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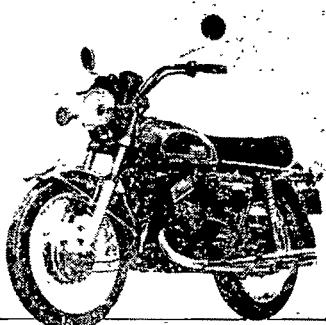
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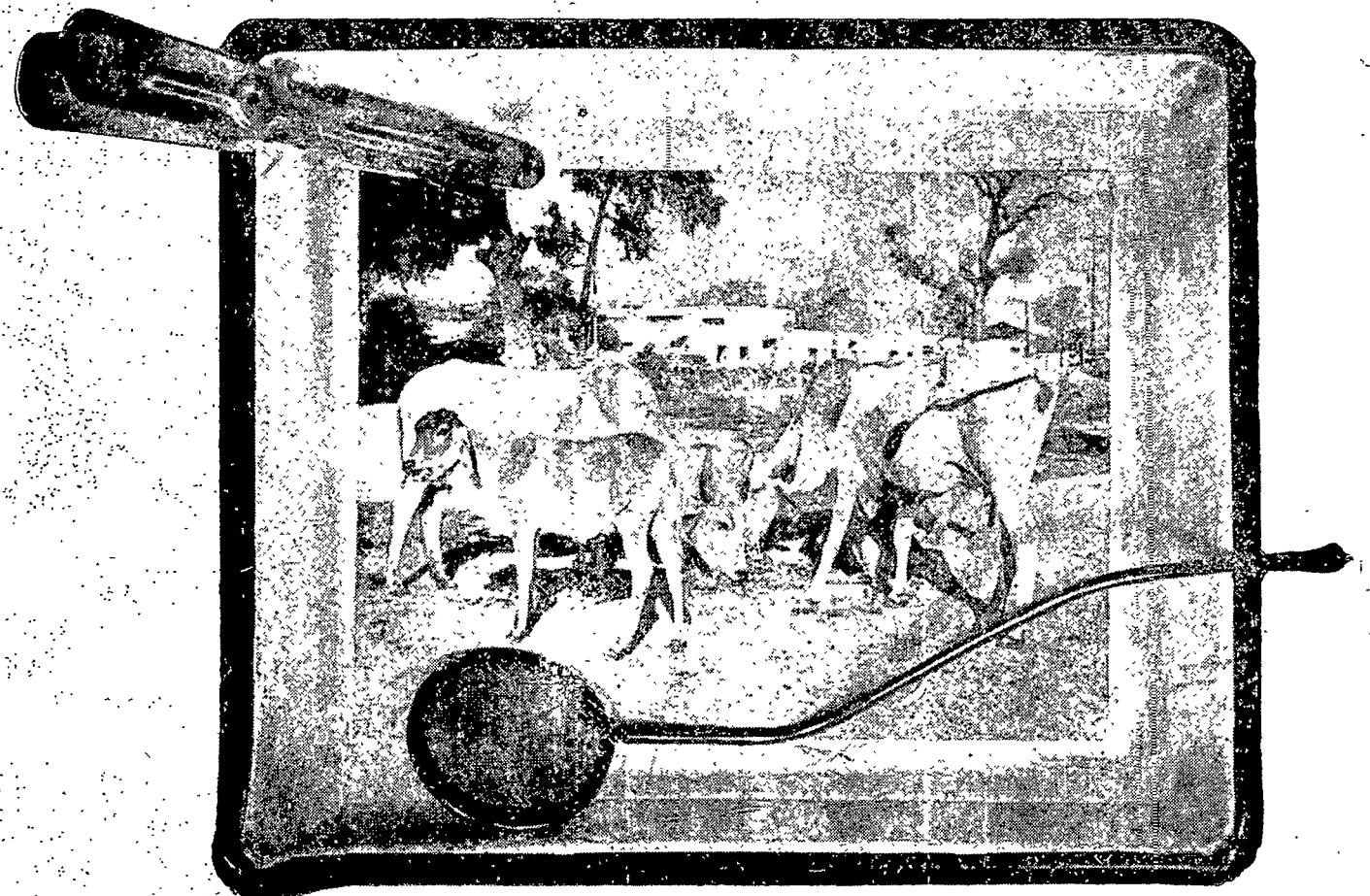
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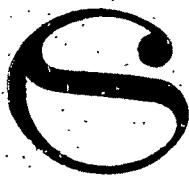
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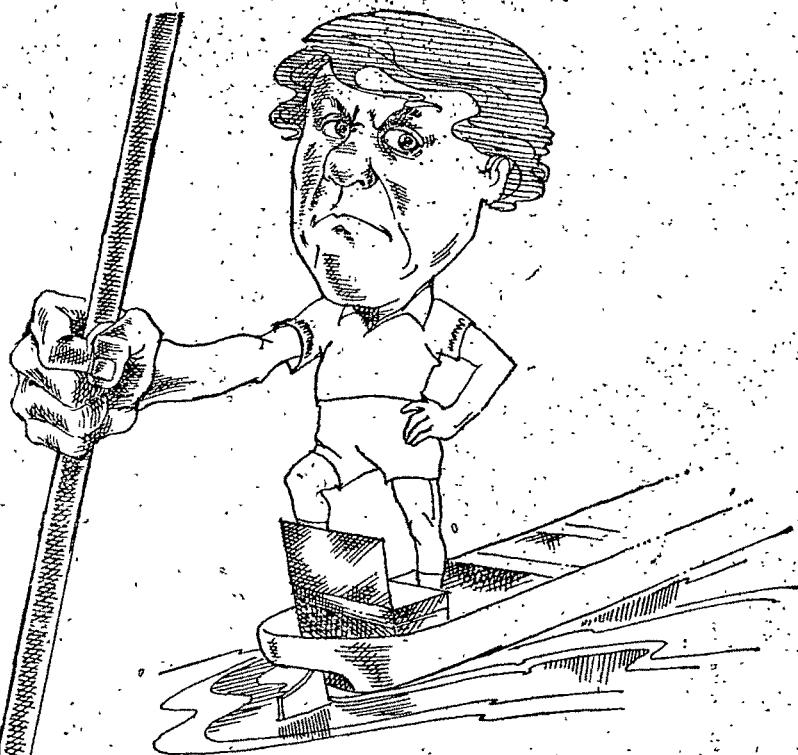
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THE PROBLEM

A short statement of
the issues involved

OF PLANS AND PROMISES

Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, Member of Parliament
and Chairman, Madras Institute of Development
Studies

THE MORAL CHOICES

Ashok Mitra, economist, former Finance
Minister of West Bengal (CPI-M)

CORRUPTION

Satya Deva, Department of Public Administration,
Punjab University, Chandigarh

OUR ONLY HOPE

Lt. General M.L. Thapan, former Vice-Chief of
the army, now retired

BUILDING AND BREAKING

Patwant Singh, Editor, 'Design' magazine

FROM HERE TO WHERE

Sri Madhav Ashish, lives in the Kumaon
Hills in charge of the ashram
founded by Krishna Prem.

FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography
compiled by Devendra Kumar

COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

'BREAKDOWN' conjures up visions of everything being pulled down magnetically, deeper and deeper into some gaping void from which it can never be retrieved. Trains derailing off tracks, cars and scooters and pedestrians and cyclists grinding each other to a halt, ceilings of newly constructed buildings caving in, telephones becoming artifacts of some archaic communication system in a bygone age, rules for regulating public life transforming themselves into indecipherable puzzles for baffling people, plans and targets set at tremendous cost turning into visions of heaven beyond your reach for generations to come, educational systems producing literate illiterates, courts becoming gaming rooms for playing patience, politics and money-making occupying the identical place in today's dictionary, and so on. It is like a never ending coil of frustration, turning the system by which we live into an animated cartoon where every image, every idea constantly transforms itself into something else while in the motion of falling.

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The classic example of this was when the heir to the throne recently declared: 'Good pilots make good politicians'. 'Since when' you gasp and wonder what age you are living in, finding it difficult to throw out of your mind all that you had ever read about the meaning of politics! You can

almost hear the deafening sound of the political crash in the distance.

Why this immense frustration doesn't turn into an all consuming anger is because large numbers of our people still operate outside of what is generally referred to as the system. The most they can do is to gaze longingly from afar at the scramble for spoils within. Those scrambling, after all, have a long tradition and much expertise in methods of survival. They have devised ways and means, however tortuous, of bypassing the system, profitably if possible. But, this cannot last forever and there seems to be no objective reason for it to do so. Despite all the bungling, the non workings, the delays and disarrays, using sand for cement everywhere both literally and metaphorically, new expertise has been built up, there is an infrastructure however tatty, and the old expertise, the extraordinary skills do survive, impatiently waiting to be utilised. It is just that the proportions of the mismanagement have brought us to a halt — that coil of frustration is beginning to choke. It may already be too late to undo it, to change the direction. Hence the need to get at the core of the breakdown, whether it be in the system or in ourselves. This issue of SEMI-NAR is an attempt towards that end.

Of plans and promises

MALCOLM S. ADISESHIAH

THE growing distance between our plans and promises and our accomplishments is disturbing. In fact, the chasm between the economic targets that we set for ourselves and their actual realisation seems to be wide and widening.

In the six plans that we have had and have, we aimed at an overall economic growth of 5-6 per cent but have achieved during this 30 year period an average growth of 3.5 per cent. In agriculture we set ourselves the aim of growing at 3-4 per cent but have been able to realise a growth of only 2.7 per cent. In industry we aimed at a 8-9 per cent growth but have realised only a 6 per cent increase. Our per capita consumption was to grow at 3 per

cent but has actually just passed 1 per cent.¹

Why has there been this gap between aims and achievement? Is it because we plan for the gap, as seemed to be confirmed by one minister of Finance, at the time when the Planning Commission was discussing the unreality of setting the growth target at a certain level, remarking 'that is alright: this is only the plan: our realisation will of course be quite different?' Is it because the substance of our Plan with its emphasis on heavy capital intensive industry means that results will take longer to be attained than planned? Does this in turn mean

L. Sixth Five Year Plan, Annex 1.1,
Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1981.

that there should be a better balance between long gestation, capital heavy projects and short term labour intensive programmes?

In agriculture, the gap between the Plan and its realisation goes back to deep seated causes. We are all now familiar with the fact that for this year, 1982-83, we will have a 3 per cent agricultural growth. But, the major issue in the agricultural field is the fact that over the last five years both our food grains — (rice, wheat, jowar, bajra, ragi, pulses) — and our commercial crops — (oil seeds, cotton, sugarcane, jute and plantation crops) — production is stagnating around 130 million tonnes (leaving aside the sharp reduction in the drought years) in the former case, and a similar constant level in commercial crops output at 70-80 lakh bales.

Every year we increase our inputs — irrigation, fertilisers, HYV seeds — but the resulting output shows no increase. In the last 5 years we have increased irrigation by 9 million hectares, fertilisers by 2 million tonnes and the area of HYV by 25 per cent at 51 million hectares.² The latest Planning Commission review refers to the 20 per cent increase in fertiliser consumption in 1981-82 over 1978-79 and concludes that 'this increase has had no visible impact on production'.³ (This is an under-statement because with 20 per cent less fertiliser used in 1978-79 we produced 131.9 million tonnes foodgrains, whereas in 1981-82 our production is estimated at 133 millions.)

If agricultural production is reaching a plateau, there is need for the reappraisal of our agricultural policy including the so called Green Revolution technology and for a new emphasis on ecological factors including the cropping pattern, water and soil use, dry land farming, and what the VI Plan document calls public policies in land reform, pricing, procurement and distribution.

And this leads to the second issue which is the growing gap between

the plan for land reform and the actualities. Land reform is not only an egalitarian imperative following from articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution, on empirical evidence, which shows how intensively the small farmer cultivates the land and the higher output he obtains from irrigation, fertiliser and HYV seeds per acre than the larger land holder. It is also clear that it is one of the answers to the problem of breaking through the plateau of production that we have reached. In the Sixth Plan we have promised ourselves the redistribution of 5 per cent of the cultivated area from holdings above 5 acres to small farmers and agricultural labour holdings. (If we achieve this, we would have redistributed 9 times more land in 6 years compared to what we have done in 30 years).

The present position (reported by the 30th round of NSS; National Sample Survey) is that small and marginal farmers (owning less than 2 hectares) who are 73 per cent of all farmers cultivate 23.5 per cent of land, while large land holders (owning more than 10 hectares) who constitute 3 per cent of farmers operate 26.3 per cent of the cultivated land. On top, there is no clear and agreed estimate of what is the surplus land available for distribution. NSS estimates it at 84 lakh acres, the Draft VI Plan at 55 lakh acres and the VI Plan at 41 lakh acres. What has been distributed to the small farmer and landless is about half of the latest reported surplus and is one fifth the real surplus.

Third, there is the question of agricultural prices which, as support/procurement prices, are established by the union government, after receiving the recommendation of the Agricultural Prices Commission. In Tamil Nadu a political party has been formed on this issue, in Maharashtra there is an ongoing agitation on the procurement support prices of sugarcane, potatoes, onions, and at the national level there is a political party which is active in this area.

In fact, these groups hold the view that the low support/procurement prices of foodgrains and agricultural production generally compared

to the rising costs of farm inputs, — fertilisers, pumpsets, tractors — account for the stagnant/declining rate of foodgrains and agricultural production — leading to non payment of cooperative dues (Tamil Nadu), and *Rasta Roko* agitations (Karnataka and Maharashtra) etc.

While the empirical evidence on this issue shows that in the first part of the 70s, when the terms of trade were more sharply against agriculture, the rate of increase and the absolute amount of output were higher than in the second half when the terms of trade were less against agriculture; agricultural prices must be adjusted annually to cover input costs (which in some instance vary from locality to locality) and the net income element for the farmer and his family.

In the manufacturing industry, the contradiction between the Plan and its achievements was noted earlier. In addition, we face here a series of contradictions within contradictions. To start with, we have emerged as one of the highest savers in the world, the latest information being for the year 1981-82, when the gross domestic saving was 22.8 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP) and our investment was over a quarter of GDP — 25.3 per cent.⁴ These are rates which characterise the most advanced countries. And yet in terms of our economy's growth, we are at the level of 3.5 per cent, when the other countries saving like us record 6-7 per cent growth, and our industrial growth is a low 6 per cent (for 1982-83 it will be 4.5 per cent), unlike the 10-12 per cent of the other countries.

The basic reason for the contradiction is the inefficient way we use our capital, as seen in the time and cost over runs of our projects which range from 50-300 per cent, and in the low use of the capacity of the plants that we have established, (for manufactures as a whole we are using no more than 50 per cent of our installed capacity). There is no more urgent problem in the

2. Economic Survey 1982-83, tables 1.9 and 1.11, Govt. of India, 1983.

3. Review on the implementation of the Plan programmes. Planning Commission, 1982.

4. *Ibid* Economic Survey 1982-83, table 1.3.

CSO Quick Estimates, February 1983,

manufacturing field facing us than the more efficient use of the enormous capital that we have saved and invested.

A second problem is the growing concentration of production in a few big houses which is being accentuated despite the legislative provisions — the Monopolies and Trade Practices Act (MRTP), the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), and reservation of over 504 items for production by the small scale industries. The various ways in which the large houses and FERA companies are able to get round the regulation enacted to contain their activities, the way in which they are able to appropriate resources meant for small or tiny units, and the number of small units which the large houses have been able to establish under various *benami* arrangements are fully documented.

The 1977-78 RBI study of 1320 companies shows an increasing concentration trend in the corporate sector in that 441 large companies with more than Rs. 1 crore capital increased from 70 per cent of total capital of all 1320 companies in 1965-66 to 75 per cent in 1970-71 and 80 per cent in 1980-81. The large houses and FERA companies had all built capacity in excess of their licenses, and so Parliament endorsed in July 1980 the government's industrial policy statement which (a) regularised the excess capacities of these firms, (b) provided for an extended automatic expansion of capacity of the large houses, and (c) permitted increased capacity for firms using advanced technology (which is another term for FERA companies) or 100 per cent export oriented houses (another name for large houses).

On the credit side, the 1977 RBI report points out that out of Rs. 1462 crores made available to small units, 68 per cent went to units with credit limits above 1 lakh, and the report of the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission in its review of the total concessional finance extended by the term lending institution (IDBI, IFCI, ICICI, etc) upto March 31, 1979 states that large and medium

units with investments of above Rs. 50 lakhs accounted for 53.3 per cent of the credit extended; while small units with less than Rs. 10 lakhs investment were granted less than 21 per cent of the total. As for the rapid increase in small industries to over 3 lakhs today, the majority of them are either auxiliaries of large firms or *benami* units of large houses.⁵

The effect of this industrial structure, within our closed and protected market and economy, is that profits are made not through increased production, sales, turnover and productivity, but through creating a regime of shortage, with a built-in incentive to produce well below capacity. In another place I have described 'the Producer's Iron law which decrees that it is not remunerative prices (based on cost plus) but only shortages that maximise profits.'⁶ There is no relation between capacity use and profitability, with firms making high profits even with 40 per cent capacity use.

Finally, as the production structure responds to the market and the only ones with the purchasing power to demand products in the market are the top 30-40 per cent of society, production is concentrated on producing what this well-to-do minority needs. The essential commodities called wage goods needed by the majority are not produced because they (the majority of people) are outside the market, not having the purchasing power to demand the goods.

The Draft Sixth Five Year Plan sums up this tragic dilemma clearly as follows: 'the pattern of industrial development that has emerged (over the three decades of planning) obviously reflects the structure of effective demand, which is determined by the distribution of incomes. An unduly large share of resources is thus absorbed in production which relates directly or

indirectly to maintaining or improving the living standards of the higher income groups. The demand of this relatively small class, not only for a few visible items of conspicuous consumption, but for the outlay on high quality housing and urban amenities, aviation and super travel facilities, telephone services etc., sustains a large part of the existing industrial structure. This means that the further expansion of the market (to produce essential wage goods needed by the majority of people) is limited by the narrowness of the market.' An urgent task is to put purchasing power in the hands of the majority.

On employment and unemployment, we are very clear on plans and targets but are still in the dark about the actual achievements. The Sixth Plan estimates that we have 21 million persons who are so severely underemployed as to be classed as unemployed, and that there will be 34 million entrants into the labour force in the Plan period. The target is to generate employment at 4.17 per cent per annum so that it is in advance of the 2.54 per cent annual growth of the labour force. This means that employment will be increased by 34 million standard person years, which will result in either providing full time employment to all those entering the labour force during the Plan period, or, what is more likely on the basis of part time employment, also to reduce the 21 million unemployment backlog.

In the absence of precise information of what is happening on the employment front, particularly in the rural countryside, only certain general conclusions can be referred to. The employment and rural work force situation is serious. The 1981 census cross checked with NSS data shows (i) that the number of workers increased not with the increase of population but at a slightly higher rate, (ii) that the proportion of workers in agriculture and what is called the unorganised sector is the same as in the 1971 census, (iii) that with the declining share of agriculture in National Income, this constant proportion (which with increase of population means higher absolute numbers) of the

5. RBI Bulletin, Vol. XXXIV No. 5, p.26, Bombay 1980.

Malcolm S. Adiseshiah: Mid Year Review of the Economy 1979, 1980 and 1981, Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India, New Delhi.

6. Ibid. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, Mid Year Review of the Economy 1979, p.8.

rural work force means lower income per worker and increased unemployment and under employment, and (iv) the 3 per cent rise in the proportion of urban workers with no increase in the proportion of non agricultural workers in the country means a fall in the rate of rural industrialisation and on this count also a lower level of employment.⁷

On poverty, which is the total denial of the only end purpose of all our development and planning, namely, the creation of conditions under which all men, women and children can live a human life, the gap between promise and realisation is scandalous. We begin with the worrisome contrariness between each Plan pledging itself to eradicating poverty and the existence of about 50-60 per cent of our people of 700 million today (350 million to 420 million) living in conditions of abject poverty.

Instead of fighting to end this contradiction, we are fighting each other over the precise numbers of the poor living with us, a fight in which unfortunately the Planning Commission has recently joined in.⁸ The numbers involved will vary with the norm used — calories, or calories/proteins, or calories/culture / health / housing / clothing, or PQLT, — and the percentage could move a few points either way depending on the methodology used. But these definitional and methodological problems do not change the stark fact that something over 350 million of our fellow citizens are living in poverty.⁹

Another related issue is whether the percentage and number of the poor are increasing, on which there are differing views. There is general agreement that the numbers are increasing (though the percentage may be decreasing), buttressed by our fast growing population. The

causes for this massive poverty include firstly the structural factor, namely, the whole system is oriented to serve the well to do. In agriculture, even the inputs like irrigation, water, fertilisers, credit which we have legislated for the small or marginal farmer are appropriated by the large and middle farmer through the latter's power.¹⁰

In industry not only has there been a concentration of economic power in the bigger corporations which are capital intensive, but the very pattern of our industrial development as just noted has been determined by the higher income group. Through the market this group determines what shall be produced. Even our infrastructural benefits have accrued largely to the relatively affluent — whether it be electricity which does not reach out to most of our rural areas, or roads built for automobile owners, or doctors and hospitals serving the urban rich with increasing super specialists¹¹ while the rural areas lack basic health services, or our education system, which though financed by public revenues, 80 per cent of which are indirect taxes paid by the poor and lower middle class majority, has 80 per cent of its completers from the top 20 per cent of society, so that our education system has become an instrument for transfer of resources from the poor to the rich.¹²

Second is the skewed distribution of assets ownership also referred to earlier and third the existence of unemployment and serious underemployment. The structural causes of our poverty are so deeply embedded in the society which we have developed that there has to be a radical change amounting to a revolution to which all of us must commit ourselves.

Iend this note with the scandal of black money and black wealth against our profession of the

7. J.N. Sinha, 1981 Census Economic Data; 'Economic and Political Weekly,' Vol. XVII No. 6, pp195-205.

8. Poverty: definition and methodology: Planning Commission, 1980.

9. C.T. Kurien: Rural Poverty in Tamil Nadu, ILO, Geneva 1977 and MIDS Bulletin Vol. IX pp. 604-630.

Gandhian ideals of truth and non-violence.

First, an explanation of the terms which are variously referred to as black money, black income; black wealth, black market activity, unreported economy, illegal economy, parallel economy, underground economy and unofficial economy. Personally, I do not like and do not use the term black money or black income or black wealth because of their racist overtones, with the implication that black is bad and white is good. I will therefore use a neutral term like unreported economy or an appropriate term like illegal economy. The unreported or illegal economy involves a set of transactions — earning an income, investing it, owning property, buying, selling or spending — which is against the law in some form. The reported or legal economy functions within the law of the country, whereas the unreported or illegal economy operates outside of it. The two increasingly overlap and are no longer separable.

Second, a word about the size of the unreported/illegal economy. By its very nature, because it is hidden, because it functions in the dark, because it is constantly increasing, there is no finality about the size of the unreported/illegal economy. The regular economy's national income at current prices was officially reported at Rs. 950,023 crores for 1979-80 and is Rs. 130,745 crores for 1981-82. The unreported/illegal economy was estimated at Rs. 600 crores in 1953-54 by Nicholas Kaldor who was invited to India from LSE by the government as a financial consultant, at Rs. 700 crores in 1961-62, and Rs. 1000 crores in 1965-66 and Rs. 1400 crores in 1968-69 by the Wanchoo Committee set up by the government to look into this area, at Rs. 1150 crores, Rs. 2350 crores and Rs. 2833 crores for those 3 years by a member of that committee, Rangnekar, right upto Rs. 46,867 crores in 1978-79 when our national income was Rs. 81,229 crores by a recent study.¹³

10. *Ibid* Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, Mid Year Review 1979, p. 14.

11. Draft Sixth Five Year Plan 1978-83, Indian Planning Commission, New Delhi, 1979.

12. NCERT: Field studies in sociology of education, New Delhi 1968,

Malcolm S. Adiseshiah: Contribution of education to equality, Unesco/IIEP, 1979.

13. N. Kaldor: Indian Tax Reform, pp. 104 and 165, Govt. of India, 1956.

Report of the Direct Taxes Enquiry Committee, pp. 8 and 249, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1971.

Thus, the estimates of the unreported/illegal economy vary from 4 per cent to 50 per cent of the regular economy. My estimate is that it is around Rs. 25,000 crores, about one fifth of the regular economy.¹⁴ The causes for this illegal economy are multifaceted. The most common is to avoid paying taxes — whether it be a stamp duty on sale of property, or buying and selling an article without a bill which evades the sales tax, or making a false declaration of income earned from a business, trade, or practising a profession as a means of paying less income tax, or falsifying the values of jewellery, cars and other property owned in order to pay a lower rate of wealth tax, or smuggling goods into the country or falsifying import vouchers to avoid or to pay less customs duty, or to the production of illegal alcohol to escape excise.

Another cause is earning an income which has to be concealed because it is illegally earned: this applies to income earned from gambling, sale of narcotics, and prostitution, to bribes, large and small, taken for obtaining a letter of intent, or license, or helping a business to escape tax penalties, or getting a train or air reservation or appointment as teacher, or admission to medical and engineering colleges, or selling rationed or levy rice, or sugar, or cement, or steel etc., in the free market, and so on to endless ways of earning illegal incomes which have to be hidden.

Afurther cause is inflation which creates a psychology of price rigging, profiteering and itself contributes to further inflation. During periods of inflation, illegal incomes increase and, as on the other occa-

Gupta, Meena and Thavaraj M.J.K.: Tax evasion and development, 42p. 'Economic Times', Annual 1974, Bombay.

Pendse, D.R. The Problem of Black Money I and II, 'Economic Times', 19 and 20 March, 1982, p. 5 and p. 5, Bombay.

Kabra, K.N. The black economy in India: Problems and policies, IIPA, New Delhi.

Poonam and Sanjeev Gupta: Estimates of the unreported economy in India, 'Economic and Political Weekly', Vol. XVII, No. 3, pp. 69-75, Bombay 1982.

14. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah: The unreported economy: its size and effects, Delhi Study Group, New Delhi, 1981.

sions, are hidden from governmental scrutiny. Spending of illegal incomes are through travel, high fee schooling, five star culture, charity and donations, and purchases and investments which are illegal.

Finally, our election system now has reached a point where, without funds from the illegal economy which are repaid by creating further illegal funds and incomes, the election system cannot run. It has been estimated that for a Panchayat Raj election a candidate needs Rs. 1.5 lakhs, for a State assembly election from Rs. 10-20 lakhs, and for parliamentary elections, Rs. 30-50 lakhs.¹⁵ But, all these many causes for the illegal economy can be reduced to one single cause and that is 'the get rich quick mentality', greed and avarice that pervades all of us.

The most serious effect of the illegal economy is not its resulting under-estimation of the economy, not in its over stating the marginal and average rates of taxation, not in its wrong estimate of the savings and investment of the community as percentage of national income, not in blurring the true growth rate of the economy, not in making nonsense of the planning process and of the system of social priorities in the Plan, not even in adding to the inequality of the system whereby some become rich and richer at the expense of others who remain poor and become poorer, the real disaster of the illegal economy is that it breeds corruption, it feeds on corruption, and makes the acceptance of corruption a part of the normal, national way of life, leading to the shocking justification of corruption as 'an international phenomenon.'

The gravest danger to our national, family and individual life is not simply poverty, not just inequality, not only unemployment, not only known production excesses and lacks, but the corruption in us that gives rise to the illegal economy, while the unreported/illegal economy in its turn strengthens and spreads corruption. This we should face honestly and frankly and fight tirelessly.

15. For a lower estimate, see B.K. Nehru: Towards a democratic structure, United Writers Association, Madras 1982.

The moral choices

ASHOK MITRA

ALL social breakdowns are inter-related. Something goes wrong somewhere, a chain reaction sets in, and anything going wrong anywhere further adversely affects any other thing already going wrong somewhere else. When several things go wrong at the same time, each big or little malfunctioning has a malevolent multiplier effect on the total system, and at all levels. The administration becomes a misnomer; nothing works without strings being pulled. Corruption eats into the core of the system. Legislators, formally elected representatives of the people, are denuded of all commitments. Like so much cattle in the Hissar market, they are bought and sold, and feel altogether unabashed about it. This climate does not leave the judiciary untouched either. Just listen to the gossip at the market place: it may frighten you, but there it is, the face of reality, kerb quotations are available on the going rate for most judges of supposedly superior courts.

The rot is all pervasive. You can buy a civil service job, you can buy a university degree, you can buy an industrial licence; the entire polity joins Mrs. Warren's profession. Even supposedly ideologically committed groups and individuals cannot altogether isolate themselves from the malady. Social discipline breaks down and it does so even within the portals of movements which, till the other day, used to

take pride in their monolithic self-negating code of behaviour.

India 1983 does indeed present this forlorn picture. The economy does not move. Over ten million court cases remain undisposed of in the entire country, democratic institutions of all types keep crumbling all the while. A semblance of order and system is barely maintained around the seats of power wherever they be located but, move away from those centres, and the signals refuse to operate. We are a huge, big country, with a huge mass of population, which is why a kind of inertia of scale operates, preventing the structure from total disintegration. Beyond a point, even this inertia will however fail to hold; that is what I would like to take a wager on.

Such, quite objectively, are the prospects. It is little use chanting the hymn: dear breakdown, only this far, and, please, do not dare further. An impulse has been set in motion. It will conform to its own laws and nibble at, and weaken, the foundations of the established social entities. It is only the very courageous ones who, surreptitiously or otherwise, would claim that the consequential disorder deserves to be applauded for it is going to open up the possibilities of a social transformation. A re-ordering of society presupposes a structure of discipline. It presupposes an underpinning of ethics and philosophy; it is a wholesale negation of nihilism.

None of these attributes define the present milieu. Cynicism can hardly constitute the base of a new social order. The cynics, who crowd the walks of money-making in the country, do not even belong to a community of detached agnostics. The overwhelming lot of them believe in the short period; their inclination is to make hay while the sun shines. They are desperately keen to derive the maximum advantage of the chaos which social corruption has given rise to; the nation is, to them, dispensable.

Even in this environment, do-gooders will abound of whom some are amateurish and some professional. True, quite a few are more interested in squeezing out whatever dividends they can from this business of do-gooding. The elimination of the transparently dishonest ones amongst them cannot by itself improve the situation. The honest ones too are afflicted by a particular variant of astigmatism. All breakdowns are tragic, but some breakdowns are more tragic than the rest, and the honest ones assume it to be their sacred responsibility to avert further disasters. Sequential, segmented advice and suggestions therefore rent the air: once the economy is taken care of, the rest of the problems will sort themselves out; if only the administrative system improves and a general tightening takes place of government functioning, the other issues will dissolve; if only the politicians return to integrity and come down heavily on corruption, the other practitioners of the art of habitual malfeasance will be weeded out in no time; if only the judges are restored to objectivity, everything else will immediately begin to fall into place and so on.

Can the generic problem be compartmentalised in this manner? Can we really pin our faith on partial solutions and pretend that the sum of such partial solutions is a comprehensive restitution of the nation's efficiency and self-confidence? Are we really going to clinch things by addressing ourselves, piecemeal, to one species of problems at a time? The answers have to be in the negative.

Once the total system is vitiated, to attack a single set of problems at a single point of time can at best be romanticism of a sort; it cannot lead us anywhere. Employees at all levels are reluctant to work, unless it be at a consideration; they too are fully aware that accountability in the system has broken down; they are no longer answerable to anyone. Those who are supposed to enforce the central discipline of the system have themselves opted out of it. Legislators, after being elected on a particular mandate, dare to cut corners with it and offer themselves for sale. They know that such acts of perfidy will not only not invite instant retribution but, for all they know, the highest in the land might even shower them with kisses and gifts in grateful appreciation of what they have done.

Judges have started accepting payments under the counter. They, without batting an eye, auction their judgments to suit the highest bidder, since they have meanwhile reached their own conclusion that in a system where the codes of basic morality have been put to total disarray, a judge would be a fool to try to effect any social engineering entirely on his own. If you cannot beat the system, join it. They have decided to join the tribe of the corrupt.

The conventional fear of an all-perceiving Almighty raining down fire and thunder fails to operate in this situation for the conviction has grown that, never mind whether there is or is not any such entity, nothing troublesome is going to emanate from that quarter. In case there is such an entity, even the Almighty is purchasable. Once the killings and thievings are over for the day, all you have to do is offer the Almighty, or His or Her local representative, a hefty offering. Your various sins will be duly taken care of. It is not just the Phoolans and the Man Singhs of the world who have indicated the profoundest faith in a certain technique of laundering sin; several others have preceded them.

The application of this technique is amenable to minor variations.

One can seek exculpation both before and after the event. It is easy to set up for oneself a furious pace of hopping to temples and mosques and churches after one has perpetrated some monstrous crimes against the people; or, if one is about to launch on an operation involving large-scale deceit of the simple-minded people who largely constitute this nation, one can, as prologue, have a round of conspicuous visiting of holy shrines.

Such trips have a demonstrative as well as a therapeutic value. The Almighty is great and good, therefore, those who are visibly thick and thin with the Almighty must also be great and good so how does it matter if they steal and kill and plunder. Since the Almighty is on their side, they must be great and good despite the killings and the plunders.

Does it not then follow that the crucial breakdown is in national morality? If that central mechanism fails, everything else will also fail. The politicians will convert themselves into merchandise, the civil servants will reveal themselves as expert bribe-takers, the judges will hawk their judgments to the highest bidder. There is, after all, little of flamboyance in what passes as national morality. It is a compendium of the snippets of moral advice one was at the receiving end of in one's childhood, simple little things, like not lying and not appropriating what belongs to others. Applied in the national context, you must not use a public office to further a private cause; you must not preach what you yourself do not observe; you must not breach the trust others have reposed in you.

Here and there, in their daily permutations, individuals tend to cut corners with these moral precepts. Sometimes they come a cropper, sometimes, if luck holds, they come to money, piles and piles of it, by virtue of their flouting the moral laws. But, in a stable society, such violations of moral laws never tend to become endemic; only a microscopic minority indulges in such behaviour; often they are caught and condemned. No doubt one or

two politicians, too, in this or that country, are known to have displayed propensities which are in breach of moral laws; they have been found out — and cashiered from public life.

In our case, the problem has been rendered immensely more complex by the heavy overlay of the feudal tradition. The problem is by no means today's child. The feudal spirit had penetrated deep into the psyche of the nation's freedom movement and the leaders of the movement, in no time at all, were made objects of undiluted hero worship. A hero by definition cannot do any wrong, and whatever the hero does you have to follow, blindly. The demonstration effect of the national leadership doubling up as heroes and heroines has been lethal.

National morality has broken down because the moral code has been set afresh from above, and the nation has obediently followed the new morality. If a Prime Minister uses her public office to further the business interests of her son, the nation's moral system takes a beating; if a Prime Minister has one set of norms regarding the observance of the directives of courts where such directives pertain to her Cabinet colleagues and another set of norms in case the directives pertain to her, the system breaks down; when a Prime Minister deliberately utters falsehoods, not in the furtherance of a great national cause but for narrow sectarian reasons, the system breaks down; when a Prime Minister actively encourages the kind of shenanigans Governor Tapase and Shri Bhajan Lal indulged in in Haryana last year, the system breaks down; when she appropriates all the resources grabbable in the nation and leaves the State governments high and dry, the system breaks down.

One can multiply the examples; it is not strictly necessary to do so. Till as long as the country remains shackled to the *mores* of feudalism, while the system of communications continues to advance spectacularly with every day, so much so that acts of commission on the part of the leading persons in the nation get known in no time throughout

the land, it would be next to impossible to dissuade the majority from adopting the moral frame of the nation's leadership.

It was somewhat different in medieval times. Within their fold of clan and family, the feudal lords conformed to a severe code of morality and honour and truthfulness. It is only in relation to those outside their fold that the breach of morality occurred and perfidy took over. But, ordinary men and women did have no means of observing such dichotomy of moral behaviour. Only those in close proximity to the kings and the lords and the barons had the opportunity to watch this duality in moral practice; the insight they gained as proximate watchmen they put to good use. Which is why while revolts occurred, these revolts, by the nature of things, were confined to the species of palace or court uprisings, and never assumed the form of a general insurrection.

Modern communications in a feudal setting have now caused havoc to the Indian moral system. The highest in the land behave in the manner of habitual criminals; they flout all the moral laws; they prevaricate and steal and take bribes, otherwise known as agency commissions. In this hero-worshipping terrain, the *praxis* of the highest becomes the model for civil servants, petty clerks, minor legislators, shopkeepers, judges and the rest, who do as the leaders do.

The breakdown has a single, central source. Attempts at peripheral repairs are thus bound to be infructuous; the problem has to be attacked at its source. Either the Indian polity is to be heaved out of its feudal moorings, or the nation's leading persons will have to reform themselves or, in case they do not, they will have to be extirpated. One is not immediately aware of any fourth alternative, and one has to reserve one's preference from among the three choices spelled out. And perhaps these are not even choices, for in case the breakdown passes beyond the threshold of tolerance, society will find itself being hustled towards a culmination of one doesn't quite know what.

Corruption

SATYA DEVA

CORRUPTION is one of the most serious problems of our society. It has the nature of a malady which is at once individual and social. As an individual malady, it takes the form of loss of sense of duty and of faith in honest individual effort. As a social malady, it appears as institutional decay and chaos, which together make for authoritarianism, rendering it more acceptable.

The nature of corruption is baffling. Sometimes it seems to be a disease by itself, and at other times merely one symptom of a deeper sickness. We find it difficult to decide whether to describe the injustices in the society of the past as corruption. The relationship of corruption with development is beset with contradictions. Thus, on the one hand, the accumulation of capital through corrupt means helps industrialization; on the other hand, corruption interferes with development in a big way: a whole green revolution can be sold out for a few thousand rupees, given in bribes for getting bad seed certified as good.¹

When we try to find ways of dealing with the problem, we soon realize that it is in the nature of a

syndrome whose understanding and mitigation must go hand in hand as in some forms of psychotherapy. In other words, we must again recognise that virtue is knowledge, or that knowledge (*jnana*) is inseparable from praxis (*karma*).

The traditional society of India was one marked by rigid stratification in terms of wealth, power and social status; even the concept of equality before the law was missing. Thus, the *Manusmriti* provides that for the crimes for which others are to be sentenced to death, a Brahman should only suffer the shaving of his head.² It is interesting that such manifest injustice was not seen as corruption. It had been legitimized through the assumption of a moral order in which God's justice prevailed, and also the notion of the transmigration of the soul, so that one's caste was according to the past life's deeds.

Such legitimations justify the social system and make individual effort aimed at change seem unnecessary and useless. Hence, in a crisis they are very valuable for helping to maintain the system. Thus, the assumption of the moral order was taken over from religion into social 'science' by the Parsonian functionalist theory, which arose in

1. Satya Deva, 'The National Seed Project in India,' *Journal of Administration Overseas*, London, Vol. XIX, no. 4 (Oct. 1980), pp. 262-69.

2. *Manusmriti*, Varanasi, 2031 Vikram, Ch. VIII, verse 379, p. 335.

the United States during the Great Depression of the thirties. In the U.S.S.R., authoritarianism is sought to be justified through Marxism. In India, top political leaders visit temples frequently and preach idealism. Further, on the one hand the adjective 'socialist' for the Indian republic is added to the Constitution; on the other hand, certificates in regard to development are obtained from the World Bank. Such continuous efforts for legitimization and maintenance of the *status quo*, coupled with sanctions against protest, explain why only a few individuals rise in revolt.

The Indian society has been changing from being an agricultural and 'feudal' society to one that is industrial and capitalistic. The change is also from being a colonial, poor and traditional society to one that is democratic, prosperous and modern. While the change is beneficial in some ways, in other ways it involves going from one sick phase into another. Capitalist society, as in the U.S.A., or State capitalist society, as in the U.S.S.R., is marked by prosperity and some kind of social mobility. At the same time, such societies are sick, as indicated by wars, the cold war, the arms race, the rapes of Viet Nam and Poland, Watergate, the treatment of Sakharov, and the high incidence of mental illness, drug addiction, suicide and crime. Corruption, in the form of patronage, sharp business practices, tax evasion and bribery, constitutes one aspect of this sickness.

Capitalism, thus, suffers from its specific contradictions. It combines increased production with a wider gulf between the rich and the poor; new consumer goods and services with more mental illness; democracy with centralized political control and an ever-present tendency toward authoritarianism; and the rejection of superstitions with a new ideology for legitimizing capitalism. Both prosperity and sickness, in short, result from the processes of capitalism — competition, exploitation, concentration of wealth and power, and bureaucratization. The sickness, which Marx calls alienation, affects both the exploiter and the

exploited. Immorality is one of the aspects of alienation and also the end result of its other aspects.

Alienation has four aspects: servitude, loss of creativity, dehumanization and immorality. Thus, it is notable that the ideal capitalist is a slave to wealth; he also tends to lose his creativity in the effort required for capital accumulation: 'The less you are, the less you express your own life, the more you have, i.e., the greater is your alienated life....'³ Further, competition endangers his survival and, so, makes him inhuman and immoral: 'how can I live virtuously if I do not live?'4

It is worth emphasizing that competition is the spur to efficiency and mobility on the one hand, and dehumanization and immorality on the other. For example, efficiency is sought through expansion, research and innovation. At the same time, an industrialist often resorts to tax evasion, adulteration of food stuffs or the breaking of trade unions, in the battle of competition. It is interesting to note that if at one time the tool is improvement of quality, at another it is its deterioration. In short, competition leads to both efficiency and corruption.

Another interesting feature of capitalism is that it tends to function more and more through bureaucratic organizations. Thus, modern governments, political parties, business firms, and even agencies for fostering science and art, such as research institutes, academies and universities, are all more or less bureaucratic in nature. They generate social power which is controlled and used by their rulers. Power holders, therefore, try to control as many organizations of different types as they can, and compete through them.

The employees of the organization become the instruments of the ruler. Their alienation is found, first of all, in their exploitation. Thus, not only the common labourer, but even a qualified specialist may get exploit-

ed, that is, he may have to work for a low pay if he is unable to find another job. The employee's creativity also is likely to be thwarted in the process of its being utilized for fulfilling organizational objectives. Thus, innovations which do not make for profit, research which exposes powerful people, and simplified governmental procedures which can reduce graft, tend to be rejected.

'Dehumanization' of employees, according to Weber, 'is the specific nature of bureaucracy and it is appraised as its special virtue,'⁵ by eliminating irrational elements such as love and hatred, it makes for efficiency. At the same time, from the point of view of mental health, it cannot but be considered to be disastrous. Thus, policemen who indulge in torture, blinding and shooting down of political opponents and suspects may be seen as mere cogs of a machine; however, many of them do feel guilty and unhappy. Hence, the mechanisms whereby individuals are converted into useful instruments, also lead to their degradation, immorality and sickness.

The power generated through the organization is partly used by the employees for their benefit also. Thus, engineers in the public works department, bereft of true creativity and humanity, band together and help in the construction of dangerous bridges for the sake of small private gains. Similarly, teachers make money through cheap notes and 'private' tuitions, doctors by giving false certificates, accountants by falsifying accounts, and so on.

The immorality which results from the misuse of the power generated through organizations is legitimized in a very interesting manner. The rulers justify their behaviour as being called for by the mandate of the electorate. Thus, a political leader will often create a hysteria by the cry 'nation in danger' so as to keep himself in power; and then claim that the war-like policy is

3. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow 1974, p. 104.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

5. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, (eds.), *From Max Weber: essays in sociology*, London 1974, p. 216.

required by the people's concern for national security.

The policies of the rulers are implemented by the employees who, in turn, plead the ruler's orders. This plea has been supported by the work of Herbert A. Simon, who has been awarded the Nobel Prize in economics. Apparently, he has provided valuable legitimization to the functioning of capitalist bureaucracies. He wrote his *magnum opus*, *Administrative Behaviour*, during the second world war, when the ethics of the cooperation of scientists and soldiers in the manufacture and use of the atomic bomb was being discussed. Simon argued that the value choices in every organization are made by the power holders; the function of employees is to make technical, or factual, choices for giving effect to the value choices.⁶

A similar debate arose in India just before the Emergency between Jayaprakash Narayan and the government. He held as immoral the use of the police for beating up peacefully assembled students and citizens (including J.P. himself), and the possible use of the army for 'scuttling our democracy' by imposing 'some sort of authoritarianism.' He appealed to the police and army officers to refuse to carry out such immoral, unconstitutional and illegal orders.⁷ Spokesmen of the government described his appeal as treasonable.

The question continues to be relevant and is faced almost everyday by many an official. Thus, when a minister wants an official to collect funds for his party, or a vice-chancellor wants an incompetent person appointed as a lecturer, or a businessman wants accounts falsified, the official to whom the order is conveyed has to decide whether to implement it. Spokesmen of officials, as well as rulers, tend to take the view, with Simon, that the 'ethical premises' are set by the rulers;⁸ and, that, for officials, being 'objectively rational' means maxi-

mizing 'given values in a given situation.'⁹ Since employees in this way shift their moral responsibility to the ruling group, and the latter to the voters, the worst immorality, such as the adulteration of food stuffs and the use of atomic bombs, are committed without anyone feeling responsible.

The view that employees should not examine the morality of an order, in effect, circumscribes their humanity. Merely taking up a job cannot take away their human right and duty to make moral judgments. Hence the employee cannot be absolved of his responsibility. Simon is in grave error in applying the positivist theory of knowledge to the field of action. Weber has warned against it: 'I, for my part, will not try to dissuade the nation from the view that actions are to be judged not merely by their instrumental value but by their intrinsic value as well. In any case, the failure to recognise this fact impedes our knowledge of reality.'¹⁰

Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on the purity of both ends and means also flows from his attachment to basic human values. In action, value (end) and fact (means) get integrated, even if it be granted that they remain distinct in seeking knowledge. Thinkers like Stephen Toulmin and Jurgen Habermas now maintain that rational value judgments are possible, thus questioning Simon's basic premise. In effect, the argument which would legitimize employees' cooperation in the immorality of rulers, is seen to be without any logical foundation.

It must be said to the credit of a number of officials that they have refused to take shelter behind such legitimations. They have also not been cowed down by sanctions such as loss of the job, reversion, super-session and penal transfer. Such instances of martyrdom, whose number grows even as authoritarianism and corruption grow, are proof of the relative freedom of the individual, and give us hope.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

10. Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Glencoe (Ill.), 1949, pp. 23-24.

The rise of capitalism in India has been via colonization; this explains, to a large extent, the specific nature and intensity of our problem of corruption. We have seen above how corruption is related to capitalistic development. Now, it is worth noting that the pattern of development in colonial societies like India, as set by the foreign rulers, was of a special kind. Further, many of the processes started by the foreign rulers have continued even after independence. Hence development continues to be in a peculiarly colonial mould.

Mahatma Gandhi did protest against it; his greatest differences with the government were with regard to the processes inherent in it. According to Rajni Kothari's recent analysis also, we have made the 'choice to join forces with international monopoly capital and to reap the advantages thereof for domestic entrenched interests.'¹¹ The IMF loan, the role of the multinationals, the continuous import of know-how and arms, the brain drain, the predominance of primary products in exports, and the pro-Soviet tilt in regard to Kampuchea and Afghanistan, are all indicative of our semi-colonial status, in the context of the imperialism of both the First and Second Worlds. Paradoxically, however, this means that our rulers in India derive their power partly from the foreign connection.

Internally, also, many of the processes started by the foreign rulers have continued as emphasized by S.N. Eisenstadt.¹² Some of the processes mentioned by him together with examples adduced by us, are as follows: a focus on the development of the central institutions of society, such as the central services, without fostering parallel changes in the broader periphery, i.e., at the village or local level; education for selected elites as indicated by the continued over-emphasis on higher education; technical education with-

11. Rajni Kothari, 'A Fragmented Nation', Seminar, New Delhi, January 1983 p. 28.

12. S.N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization: Protest and Change*, New Delhi, 1969, pp. 109 ff.

out changing the system of values and aspirations, so that its benefits, for example in the shape of medical care, do not reach the villages; the maintenance of a relatively passive type of obedience as indicated by the continuance of the laws and rules relating to the functions and rights of military men, policemen and even civil servants; the utilization of existing traditional loyalties by the rulers, such as those relating to religion, caste, region and language; weakness and under-development of autonomous interest groups as evidenced by the weakness of trade unions and the near absence of associations of small farmers and farm labour; weakness of organized public opinion as indicated by the frequency of anomie outbursts like demonstrations, *bandhs* and *gheraos*; and weakness of political framework with elites bent on keeping themselves in power, as shown by the rootlessness of political parties on the one hand, and the use of money power in elections, coupled with controls over the judiciary, the press, the radio and T.V., on the other hand.

The result of these processes, according to Eisenstadt, is that in 'colonial societies' like India, the 'class structure is probably the steepest one ... this steepness being accentuated by the differences between the traditional and the modern sectors...'¹³ In other words, there are unprecedented inequalities of wealth and power. Now, the contradictions of a society with structures and processes as sketched above are likely to be sharper than those experienced in the West: limited resources but great competition, great poverty but high aspirations, high politicization but weak influence of public opinion, and weakly-knit organizations but powerful leaders. It is suggested that this pattern is responsible for causing the acute corruption which we find in our society.

Corruption may be caused mainly by social factors as discussed above; still, it has to function through individuals. Hence, for an in-depth understanding of its causation it may be useful to examine the

formation of the antisocial or psychopathic personality, i.e., one with a 'marked lack of ethical or moral development.' The category includes individuals such as crooked politicians, unprincipled businessmen and criminals. The findings of research have emphasized the influence of faulty parental models and parent-child and family interactions in the origin of this personality. It originates 'typically in a family with a father who is 'highly successful, driving, critical and distant' and a mother who 'overindulges her son' and is 'pleasure-loving, frivolous and often tacitly contemptuous of her husband's importance'.¹⁴ In such a family, 'the children learn that appearances are more important than reality, and they, too, become part of the show-window display, where a premium is put on charm and impressing others, rather than on competence and achievement'.¹⁵

Given the specific pattern of development in India, it is to be expected that many of the families in the competitive upper middle class will tend to be of the kind pictured above. We have noted that a marked characteristic of our society is the acute steepness of the class structure. Hence a 'highly successful' father, that is one belonging to the upper middle class, is likely to be greatly concerned that his son may be declassed; this is likely to make him 'driving' and 'critical'. Seeing the son constantly driven and criticized, the mother is likely to respond by becoming 'over-indulgent'.

Being the wife of a 'highly successful' man she is not likely to work; instead she is likely to be 'pleasure-loving' and 'frivolous'. In a competitive milieu of weakly-knit organizations but powerful leaders, her husband's success is likely to owe much to underhand means such as patronage; she is likely to be aware of this and so to be 'tacitly contemptuous' of it. Hence in our highly unequal society, those who achieve success in the rat race with the help of corrupt means, like many of the politicians, businessmen and

bureaucrats, are likely to have sons with a psychopathic personality.

Now, it is from among the sons of the upper middle class that most youth leaders, business executives and higher civil servants tend to be recruited. Thus, a study has revealed that above 80% of higher civil servants in India come from this class.¹⁶ Extraction from it is almost ensured by the requirement, for all high generalist positions in business as well as government, of a good liberal education combined with 'charm and impressing others'. The result is that not only do the power holders want pliable officials, but most of the latter themselves have an inbuilt tendency to overlook moral considerations. Hence social and psychological factors reinforce each other to give us our special blend of corruption.

Our inferences regarding the control of corruption must flow from our hypotheses about its causation. We have noted that corruption is inherent in the capitalist setting. So long as nation States like the U.S.S.R. compete with other nation States through the arms race and imperialistic policies, and have an authoritarian society with bureaucratic formations, they cannot be said to have gone beyond State capitalism. Hence, it may be that the supersession of capitalism requires action at the world level. The end of this sick phase alone can bring about a healthy society, without maladies like corruption.

In the meanwhile, reduction in inequality can help. We have noted that the steepness of the class structure is associated with the intensity of corruption. Hence we must aim at deconcentration of power and wealth on the one hand, and reduction of poverty and unemployment on the other. This requires measures such as control over multinationals and monopolies; land reforms; greater autonomy to States, municipalities and panchayats; provision of funds and facilities for election campaigns through the government; the strengthening of trade unions; and

14. James C. Coleman, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, Bombay 1975, p. 373.

15. *Ibid.*

16. V. Subramaniam, *Social Background of India's Administrators*, New Delhi 1971, p. 124.

the allocation of a larger proportion of the resources for development and social services in the villages.

Rebellion against corruption, whether direct or indirect, requires action by individuals. However, if men are products of circumstances and upbringing, how can they rebel? The answer lies in recognising, with Marx, that it is men who change circumstances.¹⁷ The autonomy of the individual flows from the contradictions of capitalism. Thus, while Parsons and Simon are right in maintaining that the system inculcates identification among its members, they fail to note that its sickness makes for rebellion also.

If the organization enslaves its employees, it also gives them an opportunity to organize and stand up jointly against participation in immorality. While most members of the upper class pursue their own interests, a section goes over to the side of the oppressed, particularly those intellectuals who become conscious of their possible role in bringing about a more just and healthy society. Hence, individuals do get an opportunity to assert themselves.

The possible role of the individual also becomes obvious if we consider the origin of the psychopathic personality. We have noted that the sons of a person who wins the rat race by underhand means are likely to be corrupt. Hence, sticking to competence and honesty protects one's sons from becoming antisocial; it is an individual as well as a social gain.

While individual action is important, it must not be forgotten that, to be effective, individuals have often to act through organizations. If organizations are engines of power, they must be fought with the help of other organizations. Thus votaries of individual action like Mahatma Gandhi, also had to function through organizations. The most powerful weapon against every social sickness, including corruption, is the organization of those who have nothing to lose.

17. Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, in *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1976, p. 619.

Our only hope

M. L. THAPAN

AN examination of the current domestic scene could begin with period comparison before judgment is attempted as to its relative state. Are we better off now, or do our social institutions work better than twenty five or fifty years ago? What was life like under the Mughals, the Marathas, the Pindaris or the Thugs? Such retrospection could continue indefinitely, but the conclusions drawn therefrom would, at best, be generalisations. This is for two reasons; one, that life is a cycle of change and no two sets of circumstances are ever identical, and the other that we are not such a compact, homogeneous society that our reactions to our surroundings would find universal acceptance.

We thus find the dichotomy of thought so widely divergent. There is the politician's view that we have only now, and because of his selfless service, emerged from darkness into light; and the harassed, inconsequential citizen's prayer to the Almighty, that he be spared from such ministrations. There could be several explanations for the yawning gap between these viewpoints; perhaps that which is fundamental and basic, is the differing interpretations of morality and what constitute norms of good behaviour.

It is possible that, if there existed a classless society, there may have been some uniformity of opinion. But this remains an utopian dream and, even where revolutions have taken place to establish socialist States, new classes have emerged to displace the old. Power provides opportunity, and the 'never had it so good' section of society finds codes of behaviour, such as the Ten Commandments, inconvenient of observance. Mammon is the god to worship; all else must be subordi-

nated to obtaining his munificence. This section may constitute but a minute fraction of our population; however, being at the top, its example exercises a baneful influence over the lower layers. Human nature being what it is, takes its cue from its leadership, and even the strong-willed find that they have to bend before the wind if they wish their simple, human needs to be satisfied.

Fortunately, most of our people still live in rural areas where their wants are basic and where, apart from the radio, they are fairly insulated from the murky goings-on in the cities and the seats of power. But for this shelter, and the fact that oppression of the peasantry has been a favourite pastime of all previous rulers whatever their shades or denominations, thus engendering an attitude of resignation, their feelings may have found expression in more violent form. The soothing philosophy which the elders use to restrain their young is 'This, too, shall pass'; but the reserves of patience and resignation are fast running out.

It would be tedious to tabulate the areas of our life where the rot has set in. Degeneration is endemic, and there is hardly any facet of human activity which has not been corroded. Values have now begun to acquire different meanings and we are rapidly approaching the point of no return. Just as the nuclear holocaust clock warns the human race that it is only three minutes to midnight, so also introspection and good sense tells those who are prepared to see and to listen that we have very little time left to put our house in order. An ordered society cannot function without leadership, and it is to reform the quality of that leadership that we should address ourselves.

When, after being granted Independence, we opted for the Westminster model of democracy, the underlying presumption was that there would be at least two major ideological parties, more or less evenly matched, alternating in two roles, one to function in office and the other to serve as the opposition. We did not cater for a dominant

single party remaining in office, term after term, with a fragmented, ineffective opposition, ideology being of no pressing importance to either of them except in the drafting of election manifestos. Neither did we cater for the cult of personality where a party is formed around an individual, not for reasons of ideological sympathy, but from pure expediency. Nor did we visualise the easy mobility with which representatives of the people, elected on a specific label, would move across to different labels without so much as your leave.

The full implications of adult franchise suddenly being conferred on a large mass of people, unacquainted with the niceties of the democracy apparatus, also, perhaps, did not strike us. Sardar K.M. Pannikar, who was a member of the States' Reorganisation Commission, once remarked in 1956 that if, under the Constitution, the only qualification for a voter was that of having obtained the age of majority, and the only disqualifications were insanity if medically certified or criminal conviction, then, given the high level of illiteracy obtaining in the country, it was only reasonable to assume that those elected to office would fall roughly in the same ratio as the illiterate to the literate.

In the debates leading to the drafting of the Constitution, Dr. Rajendra Prasad had questioned the wisdom of not prescribing minimum qualifications of education for those elected to legislative office, so that they could understand the intricacies of the affairs of State. It passes all comprehension as to why the Constituent Assembly chose to ignore this very sensible observation and failed to incorporate an appropriate safeguard in the Constitution.

The effects of these decisions are now very much a part of our political life. Universal adult franchise has led to sectarian appeals being made by prospective candidates in the name of language, religion, caste and community; all strong emotive factors to sway the minds of illiterate or semi-literate voters to the detriment of our professed

secular aims. The success of such appeals is evidenced by the quality of our legislative assemblies. Barring a minuscule minority, their contribution to the growth of good government has been negligible.

Participant democracy has now been reduced to a strictly business venture; professing no particular ideology, whose label can I attach myself to, how much will it cost, what do I get out of it after I am elected and what must I ensure which would enable me to stay the full term? Money, power and influence are the key operating factors in this travesty of the democratic process.

We might have weathered all these games which politicians play, if the steel frame of public administration — the permanent civil servants — had stood up to the onslaught. The administration in France faced a similar challenge after the Second World War, before the election of General de Gaulle as President of the Republic. Governments then fell like nine-pins, one after the other, their average life being six months or less. However, the civil administration carried on, unconcerned with the goings-on above them. If Clemenceau once observed that war was 'too serious a business to be left to the Generals', it could be said of France, at that period, that ministering to the needs of the people was too serious a business to be left to the politicians.

Unfortunately, in our case the steel frame wilted and has since been corroded by an unholy mixture of intimidation and inducement. Had there been even a semblance of two party legislative assemblies, each alternating for power, there may have been a hope for preserving the independence of the administration. This has not been so, and dominant one party rule has led to 'committed' administrators; alignments going so far as identification with individual politicians which, in turn, lead to witch hunts and travelling circuses; dependent on changes in the fortunes of their mentors.

How does one set about an improvement in the quality of our

leadership? It is doubtful if we can expect any help from the politician who has a vested interest in perpetuating the present state of affairs. He has his own fluid code of behaviour, and standard norms are totally foreign to him. Unethical conduct or moral turpitude are seldom corrected within the fraternity; it is left to the judiciary to pronounce judgment on their misdemeanours if they have been careless enough to be found out. At the most, they may be moved from the political highway to a vacant parking lot, to be gathered up when the dust has settled down. If, therefore, reform in the politician as an individual, or the political system, as a whole, is a chimera, our hope lies in the only other segment of society which provides leadership on a continuing basis—the administration—for self regeneration.

The pessimistic observer will say that we have already crossed the point of no return, that we are plunging headlong into chaos, and that the patient will no longer respond to medication. Twenty years ago, Galbraith made very much the same observation though he qualified it by saying that India was a living example of 'functional anarchy'. The administrator must certainly not share the extreme pessimistic view for, if he does, he stands condemned by his own admission and ceases to have any justification for his continuance.

Quis Custodiet ipsos custodes? Juvenal asked, nearly two thousand years ago, but the human race is still muddling along. 'Who is to guard the guards themselves?', is the question which the responsible administrator, (and we must assume they are all responsible), needs to ask himself constantly in these melancholy times. Can he visualize, with equanimity, the steady fragmentation of political parties, with no ideals of common effort to tackle the tasks of our development? Does he consider the cult of personality as a driving force to be of any permanence? Has he not the imagination, as a perceptive observer, to project his vision some years ahead and conceptualise a scenario of self-seeking politicians, totally at loggerheads, with no prospect of stable

governments being formed in the States, and even at the Centre?

If he applies his mind to these possibilities, and believes that they have substance, he can then proceed to prepare himself mentally for the testing times ahead. He knows, better than most, that the dividing line between 'functional' anarchy and plain anarchy is very thin indeed.

The pressures and handicaps under which the administration is called upon to discharge its duties are severe. The ignorance of the elected representatives of the people, of the line of demarcation between their role of laying down the broad framework of policy, and the functions of the administration to give effect to it, is near total. There is continuous interference up and down the line by all and sundry, with the result that the administrator never has a free hand, and work proceeds by fits and starts at an agonisingly slow pace. Much time is wasted in his having to dance attendance on various political functionaries, whose public image, in their own eyes, is seemingly incomplete unless it is set against a background of government officialdom.

The principle of ministerial responsibility for things going wrong is seldom invoked; scapegoats are always found in the administration. Nothing that the police do ever seems to be right, and their orchestrated denigration only serves to reduce them to a state, to parody Galbraith, of active inertia. Management, and the means of maintaining high morale, are closed subjects to minds not exposed to the art of good administration.

The presentation of reasoned official argument, which may not conform wholly to political thought, is regarded as plain obstruction; resolved either by the intimidation machine which is then set in motion to discourage further deviation, or by the dangling of the ripe plum to tempt the weaker willed into ready submission. It is not surprising that independence of thought and action are at a discount when operating in such a milieu. Job opportunities being limited and economic conditions as they are, government ser-

vants find themselves with few other options; hence their preference for discretion to valour.

U

nder such handicaps, the process of self regeneration will be long and arduous. It is, however, our only hope. It will call for hardship and sacrifice at all levels, more particularly at the top levels of the administration to whom those below look up to for precept and example. Inter-service differences must be sunk and greater cohesion sought amongst the different branches of the administrative apparatus. Sycophants must be shunned, if sycophancy, as a virus, cannot be controlled. Senior officers must not withdraw into their shells, but step out and give a positive lead to their subordinates. Professional competence and merit must receive due encouragement and reward. Impartiality must be a watch word; as also loyalty, which must be three-dimensional; to superiors, colleagues and subordinates, alike.

Special care must be taken to preserve integrity. It should be guarded jealously within the chain and not left to outside agencies to point accusing fingers towards them. The definition of an officer must be more clearly appreciated. His duties and responsibilities need to be clearly spelt out. He must be taught to endeavour to live up to them; he must not permit himself to degenerate into a glorified clerk. He must retain his self respect for, once this is lost, he no longer has any ideals which can inspire him to higher efforts. He must be conscious, at all times, of the fact that he and his subordinates are servants of the State; that their salaries come from the taxes paid by the people, and that the people have first claim on their services. If he can achieve moral regeneration and differentiate between right and wrong, he will not need a *vade mecum* of 'do's and 'don'ts', to tell him how to act in different situations. His reactivated conscience by itself will be his faithful guide.

The future lies in his hands. He must ponder over this in all earnestness. History will not forgive him if he fails to respond to the call for a moral awakening.

Building and breaking

PATWANT SINGH

TO thoughtful Indians, 'breakdown' can mean many things in present-day India. It can mean the breakdown of accepted norms of conduct: the increasing lack of propriety in public life, the evident disrespect for life and property, the erosion of legal and constitutional safeguards, the mindless violation of our urban and natural environments. Because it can mean all of these things, there is a sense of unease at the disintegration of institutions so carefully established to regulate our political and social conduct along acceptable lines.

The direction we are moving in today is not only incompatible with morality in public life, but also lacks pragmatism and a sense of priorities in our development objectives. Since others will address themselves to the different areas in which the rot has been allowed to spread, I prefer to comment on our deteriorating urban situation.

Despite India's amazing heritage of building towns and cities which were spectacular in scale, eminently functional, imaginative in their use

of materials, attentive to the needs of climate and striking in their aesthetic impact, post-Independence India's efforts have been a disgrace whichever way you look at them.

Not a single town built since 1947 reflects imagination or perception of our climate, needs and resources. The plans and architectural forms are moronic copies of the long-discarded designs of other countries. There is a reason for this. Because of the all-pervasive culture of the public works department, the environment in the Union Ministry of Works is not conducive to creative thinking.

As an illustration of how out of tune the Ministry is in its understanding of professional realities is a decision of its Director General of Works — taken as recently as February 1982 — whereby 25 out of 27 senior architects were removed from the control of the Chief Architect of the Central Public Works Department and placed under different Chief Engineers of the department. The result is that the country's Chief Architect no longer has

administrative, technical or design control over his own architects; it is exercised by the chief engineers who decide on the appropriateness of different design solutions! The way things work in this country, the engineers will soon start telling the architects how to design.

The perverse nature of this decision aside, no less strange is the fact that it was a reversal of an earlier order of the Ministry — passed in 1972 — which had placed government architects under the administrative and technical control of the chief architect. Who authorised the Director General of Works to reverse this order? It is thus that fissures develop in established institutions.

Nowhere in the world are architects subordinate to engineers. The architect is the master builder: he creates the spaces, forms, moods and excitement in buildings. Once the concept of what he is looking for has taken shape in his mind and on the drawing board, the engineer is asked to work on the structural details of the concept. The architect comes first, not the engineer. If we keep on reversing this role, its effect on the design of the buildings we build will be disastrous.

Equally tragic is the manner in which town planners have been downgraded by the IAS in this country. Even the Chief Town Planner of India has to virtually work under a Joint Secretary — naturally of the IAS cadre — with little knowledge or qualifications in urban planning but with every intention of making it impossible for the planner to function effectively. One or two instances will show how the system actually works in India today.

Before formulating a five-year plan, the Planning Commission appoints expert groups for various areas of development. In the most recent case of the Sixth Plan, the Town and Country Planning Organisation was not represented on them at all; only one professional urban planner was on the group which worked on urban and regional policies. Why?

There are other instances. An 'expert' group, recently appointed by the Ministry of Works and Housing, to work on the 'urban development strategy for India during the following decades', had as its Chairman an IAS officer. The other members from Bombay, Calcutta, Hyderabad and the convenor, were all IAS officers. No urban and regional planner was a member of this group, nor was any architect for that matter. The purpose of the group is 'to deliberate and develop policy options in the broad field of urban and regional planning and development.' Is an urban planner considered unnecessary in a group appointed to discuss problems of urban and regional planning?

Another instance further underscores how personal interests are held above the national. After the UN Habitat Centre's inception some years ago, a number of international conferences have been held to discuss urbanisation trends in the economically developing countries. The opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences is the obvious *raison d'être* for these meetings. Yet, not a single town planner was included in India's official delegations: whether at the time of Stockholm and Vancouver, or the meetings held since at Nairobi, Mexico and Manila. It needs to be mentioned here that delegations from other nations were most often headed by their professional town planners.

The deliberate exclusion of urban planners from committees whose aim is to formulate planning proposals, is just one side of this unfortunate picture. The other is worse. The most sane recommendations by town planners, backed by professional experience, are often turned down by administrators, either at the behest of politicians or because their own egos require them to over-rule the professionals. The loser in each case is the nation —not the individual or the ministry concerned, but the country.

The inevitable consequence of the above is that so long as town planners are subordinated to IAS officers—wedded to the mystique of

their service and the rights it confers on them—they will be unable to cope with the increasingly complex problems of urbanisation in India. Just as economists and technocrats are being accorded the status they deserve, so should urban planners.

Now for the politicians: not the titanic builders, philosopher kings or the *budhimans* of the past, but the corrupt political *dadas* of the present. It should be instructive to see how they are able to violate zonal laws, building regulations and other regulatory controls.

The blatant favouritism shown to the owners of three 5-star hotels in Delhi last year — in flagrant disregard of land-use laws and height restrictions — is a classic example of the breakdown in the working of agencies established to ensure that urban development stays within the parameters of master plans.

The promoters of these hotels are very close to the ruling party — an increasingly accepted criterion for riding roughshod over all municipal regulations. It was the same when the Janata Party was in power. In fact, if one individual more than anyone else, must take the blame for what is being attempted in Delhi today, it is Sikander Bakht, the Janata Minister of Works and Housing. The proposal to construct hotels on residential plots, which had been rejected on the recommendation of the New Delhi Reconstruction Advisory Committee which government had established on Mrs. Gandhi's initiative, was revived under Sikander Bakht's prodding. The first thing that happened under his ministership was the winding-up of the NDRAC. Then a scheme was hatched which, if implemented, would have resulted in the loot of Delhi. Through Sikander Bakht's initiative flowed the brash idea of converting 1,300 acres between Rajpath and Cornwallis Road into one massive extension of Connaught Place. Connaught Place, incidentally, is only 80 acres in area.

The attempt failed then because it was resisted by the DDA. Paradoxically, the DDA itself now

appears to be in tune with such moves.

But, the decision which more than any other outraged the sanctity of the capital's character and landscape was the mindless manner in which it was decided to locate the stadiums for the Ninth Asian Games all over Delhi. If Asiad had to be hosted, why did the stadiums have to be scattered all over Delhi, marring the capital's historic landscape and creating cross-town traffic problems which are already bad enough? Couldn't the entire games complex have been located some kms away from the capital rather than in the heart of densely built residential and commercial areas? Like the Nehru Stadium?

It is important to differentiate between planning mistakes — a result of planners being over-ruled by politicians and bureaucrats — and the performance of our designers, engineers, builders and workers. The latter deserve unstinted praise for their magnificent performance in the limited time available. But this in no way justifies the siting of the stadiums: a differentiation which most of our newspapers and commentators failed to make.

Iwonder how many found it odd that while India was holding the Asian games in Delhi, the Indian delegation to UNESCO's General Assembly meeting in Paris at the time was asking it to include 24 Indian monuments — including the Taj Mahal — in the 'World Heritage' list? What this request means is that if help is needed to preserve any of these, UNESCO launches an international campaign, as it has done in the case of 27 monuments which include Mohenjodaro in Pakistan and Herat in Afghanistan.'

It will be in place to mention here that the Indian newspapers are directly responsible for a lot of misinformation on urban problems. This is one of the reasons the public is so uninformed on the magnitude of the disasters being inflicted on India's urban form. For instance, so far as *The Hindustan Times* was concerned, Asiad 82 had 'transformed the capital beyond recognition.' It certainly changed a few

avenues and streets, but did the Rs 500 crores spent on those improve the quality of life for the capital's citizens? Did it change the stench and filth of the city's slums?

It is amazing how easily the educated were fooled by marginal improvements in a minuscule part of the capital. To where, for instance, were the thousands of workers — who lived in shanties around the stadiums — removed overnight? Did the Asian games bring adequate water supply to the colonies and bustees whose communities depend on a single leaking tap for a day's water supply? Why did the farming communities around Delhi — or for that matter the whole country, go for hours without electricity while lights were blazing in the stadiums, five-star hotels and such?

The expenditure on the Asiad extravaganza — on a scale this country has seldom seen before — not only indicates the total breakdown in our sense of priorities, but it also underscores the contempt with which the principle of accountability in the spending of public funds is brushed aside by a democratically elected government.

While Union Ministers had the gall to keep on juggling figures even in a forum like India's Parliament, (in August 1981, Buta Singh, Minister of Sports, told the Rajya Sabha that the Asian games would not cost more than Rs 61.93 crores; less than a month later N.D. Tiwari, Union Minister of Labour, told the Lok Sabha in September 1981, that the total expenditure on the games would be Rs 361.26 crores; Buta Singh once again reiterated his earlier figure as recently as February 1983), it is interesting to see the meticulousness with which a Mughal published figures of monies spent by him. Shah Jahan's *khazanchi*, Rudradas, has given a detailed account of the expense incurred on the Taj Mahal down to the last pie. The total figure amounted to rupees four crores eighteen lakhs forty eight thousand eight hundred and twenty-six rupees, seven annas and pies six only!

Aside from accountability, the breakdown of urban India results

from the manner in which the State and Central governments and other autonomous and semi-autonomous organisations flout each other's directives so that the corrupt elements who have been elevated to high office in our public life can make fortunes by manipulating urban land prices.

Take the case of Bombay whose Backbay scheme still remains India's biggest urban fraud since independence. Even though the city's Municipal Corporation vigorously opposed the reclamation of land in the Backbay area for many reasons including the unbearable strain this would place on the civic services, the imbalance it would create between the seven million citizens of Greater Bombay and the Backbay area and the problems the fire brigade would face in controlling and extinguishing fires in the skyscrapers bound to mushroom in the area of reclamation, the scheme was rammed through.

Plots were allotted whilst they were still under water, plans for many buildings were approved overnight, the FSI was made three times higher than for the rest of Bombay, rule 39 of the Development Control Rules which requires the reservation of 15 per cent urban open space for each plot was overlooked, and so on. And this after the Bombay Municipal Corporation had passed a Resolution on May 22, 1974 proclaiming that the Backbay development was against the public interest. If this isn't the breakdown of institutional checks and balances, what is?

For the promoters and those who colluded with them, the Backbay scheme was like a proverbial oil strike. With easy payments spread over the years, the brunt of heavy ground rents passed on to the subsequent property holders, and most of the construction costs realised through earlier bookings, the resultant profits figured in crores.

It isn't that Bombay is an exception. This scenario with its sordid undertones is being repeated everywhere. Take the case of Chandigarh. While the Peripheral Control Act of 1952 clearly prohibits buildings within ten miles of the green belt around

the city, two major townships have been developed right next to Chandigarh in the last ten years or so.

Whatever the details of the twisted reasoning which made Punjab and Haryana build two new townships on the periphery of Chandigarh, the fact is that their moves reflect a sickness which is too often evident in our country today. There was no justification for Punjab to start building Mohali on Chandigarh's boundary on the south-west, nor for Haryana to 'retaliate' by building Panchkula on the north-east. Who the two States were out to spite, whether each other or Chandigarh, is irrelevant. What is relevant is that the siting of these two satellite towns deliberately flouted the Periphery Control Act. It doesn't portend well for the country when State governments start flouting the laws of the land with impunity.

As time goes on, the effect of these two townships on Chandigarh will be devastating. Mohali's projected population figure is 250,000 and Panchkula's 125,000. The effect of this sudden population explosion on Chandigarh's doorstep will be to strain its resources to breaking point. Its schools, colleges, hospitals, shopping centres, transport and road systems, will have to bear an additional burden in the form of the day-to-day demands of another 3,75,000 persons. The infrastructure of Chandigarh which at present caters to the needs of 1,50,000 will soon be catering to 5,00,000 persons, and this figure does not take into account its own rapidly expanding population. In about 10 years, Chandigarh, planned for half a million people, will be catering to over a million, thanks to the mindless actions of the two adjoining States.

As it is, the city does not have a garbage collection system; its main source of water supply is working to only 40 per cent capacity, its construction and other workers who were to be provided housing years ago have still not got it and, in consequence, are living in slums around the city. So much for the town which Nehru saw as a symbol of the country's faith in the future.

In the final analysis, no one can — or has a right to — expect discipline of others unless rigorous self-discipline is exercised first. It is for Delhi to set an example of integrity and imagination in handling its urban development. If the States or other errant institutions then fail to fall in line, the Centre should know how to exercise its writ over them.

To start with, Asiad 82 should not be viewed as a prelude to the World Olympics in 1992 but as a reminder of the need to avoid such wasteful commitments in the future. With their appetites whetted by the Asiad experience, there will be many advocates within and outside government who will want the city to host the World Olympics. Their subjective advice must be seen for what it is and firmly rejected.

Delhi is the capital of the country and, what is more important, it has a long and rich lineage. It is a national heritage. No one has the right to clutter it up with bizarre and garish buildings complete with neon lights, loud music, traffic snarls and such. Its building, zoning and land-use laws cannot be changed from day to day to help profit people with the right political connections.

Another bit of mischief which needs to be nipped in the bud is the proposal to locate a Dry Port in Delhi. Enough has been done already to destroy the capital's character. It does not need another half a million people, a host of ancillary industries, thousands of tonnes of additional freight carriers on its roads, and smuggling and such activities in its midst. Rather than sticking by a wrong decision later so as not to lose face, it would be wise and prudent to avoid a wrong decision now.

If the great builder, Shah Jahan, could set such store by the advice of his architects, Ustad Hamid and Ustad Ahmed, the result of which was the creation of Shahjahanabad, surely our times too require respect for men of creativity and qualification.

It is still not too late to rebuild what has broken down.

From here to where?

SRI MADHAV ASHISH

CIVILISATION has lost its rationale. Men have lost their direction. So long as we firmly believed that we knew what was good for us, so long as we never doubted that the acquisition of wealth was justified by the advantages it gave, that maximisation of production would reduce prices, expand markets and increase profits, that resources were unlimited, that technology would solve all problems, that medicine would find a cure for all disease, for just so long could we inspire our children with the ambition to learn more, earn more, build bigger, travel faster, and turn the world into a 'better' place. We no longer believe it, and nor do they. They want money without work, status without character, rights without duties.

We were sold on success, on achievement, on competitiveness. We kept up with the Joneses. We followed the fashions. We accumulated status symbols. We traded in the future. We believed the glossy magazine advertisements, with their illusory promises of everything going right, if only one had the money to buy the right things, go to the right places, eat the best food, wear the right clothes, and live 'graciously'.

Yes. We were manipulated: by advertisers, by the big industrialists,

by publicity campaigns, by doctors, scientists and politicians. They could manipulate us because they, too, believed in what they cheated us into believing. They wanted the same sort of world, though they wanted more of it for themselves. The only thing they did not want us to have was power.

We all shared the same illusion: the belief that pleasure and leisure, a high material standard of living, were sufficient aims to make us all happy and fulfilled. How wonderful life would be if we were all well fed, well clothed, well housed, happy, healthy, and intelligent! We fought for our illusions. We fought for socialism, for the equitable distribution of wealth, for the welfare State. We wanted more schools, hospitals, factories, institutions. We wanted guaranteed employment, social security, paid holidays, free health services, pensions linked to the cost of living index. We wanted subsidies, bank loans and tax concessions. We measured everything in money, black, white or grey.

The more we got, the more we wanted. Satisfaction evaded us. The more feverish our search for satisfaction, the more we turned to drink, sex and drugs, the more bitter our dissatisfaction grew. We blamed the leaders, the industrial-

ists, the multinationals. We blamed everyone but ourselves.

Whenever one pursues a bright illusion, reality follows like a shadow. The golden promise of our now global civilisation throws long shadows: nuclear war, overpopulation, resource depletion, ecological collapse, civil disturbance, decline of morality, degeneration of institutions—one could prolong the list indefinitely. We are puzzled and confused, like a child whose mechanical toy has broken: it all worked so well, and now it has gone wrong. It is, indeed, childish to think we could have light without shadow, to have nuclear energy without the threat of a nuclear holocaust.

No one can deny the value of the knowledge amassed by the current civilisation, or the value of its having been disseminated over a higher proportion of the population than in any previous era. It might even be fair to say that more people have developed those human potentials which depend on nutrition, health and relief from the mind-dulling drudgery of continuous physical labour than at any other time in human history. In this sense it would be true that the life aims which spurred the progress of our civilisation were sufficiently valid to result in these benefits to mankind. But this does not mean that those aims are eternally valid. They were valid up to a certain point beyond which they ceased to provide the prizes expected of them.

Those aims sought solutions to human problems in terms of material well-being. We gained a degree of material well-being, even though the gain was limited to a favoured portion of the world population. Those who enjoyed the material gains found themselves still dissatisfied. The human problem took on a new dimension. Even as we begin to come to terms with man's psychic needs, we find material resources running out. There is not enough material in all the world to satisfy the material desires of everyone, barely enough to satisfy their basic needs.

It is only with the wisdom of hindsight that we can see that our aims were inadequate. It would not be just to say we were mistaken, because there was no way by which we could have foreseen the consequences of our actions until they began to impinge upon us. It is the case of the pioneer who cannot take a wrong road, because there are no roads but the one he is taking. A few exceptional people, like Gandhiji, sensed that we were going wrong, and proposed alternative socio-economic systems that might have avoided the dangers we have fallen into. But those alternative systems required a different world outlook, a different life evaluation, a different economic system from the current ones. The influential section of society that was fully geared to the monetary economy would have none of them.

Current trends — experiments with alternative life-styles, the human potentials movement, loosely classed together as the Aquarian Movement — indicate a mounting awareness that nothing of great significance will be achieved by mere adjustments of the current system, and that what is required is a complete change in the human outlook and in human expectations. In other words, minds wedded to the current ideal of profit-oriented individualistic achievement will not be able to see a way out of the mess produced by following this very ideal, with its unstated but inherent corollary of the exploitation of man by man.

It is only when the viewpoint is changed that the eye of intelligence can see alternatives as real options. The habitual viewpoint is, only too often, so hedged around with selfish interests that no alternative appears possible. Indeed, self interest is the current viewpoint.

As opposed to values that have been consciously adopted, those which have been inherited as part of the traditional culture are attached to specific modes of behaviour. In times of social change, modes of behaviour are changed. The new modes, not being associated with the values attached to the discarded modes of behaviour, do not have the

old values attached to them, nor are the old values easily adapted to the new behaviour. Thus, the value system of an old culture may perish in one generation of changing life-styles. Young people therefore find themselves without a compass with which to steer their lives, and the old people's advice often appears invalid. This is why, from time to time, there is need for a conscious reformulation of world views and life aims which reaffirm the principles on which value and significance are based.

At such times it is useless to think merely in terms of religious revival. We cannot advance by regressing to old and outworn models of human behaviour. Undoubtedly, we can learn much from the past, particularly from periods when social harmony seemed to reflect the inner harmony of the spirit; but such learning is different from any mere nostalgic longing for reversion to the norms of a 'golden age'. If we are to understand the relevance of our past value systems to the present, we have to stand at a sufficient distance from our own religious inheritance to be able to see it with the objectivity of an outsider.

For instance, both Hindu and Muslim must be able to look at themselves, each from the viewpoint of the other, or neither will ever understand the sources of the mistrust with which the other views him, nor see how the gap between what he thinks himself to be and what he actually is destroys his credibility. We all tend to confuse religion as mystical philosophy with religion as sacramental culture and, again, with religion as a socio-political force.

This confusion makes nonsense of our claim to be a secular State, for we have government officials supervising the administration of religious institutions; we cannot stop the anachronistic carrying of arms by Sikhs; we cannot check the Muslim birthrate, even though many of the wholly Muslim countries are doing so; we cannot even check the level of noise pollution by loudspeakers blaring in the name of religion. In short, we have not yet formulated a code of human conduct which is both applicable to



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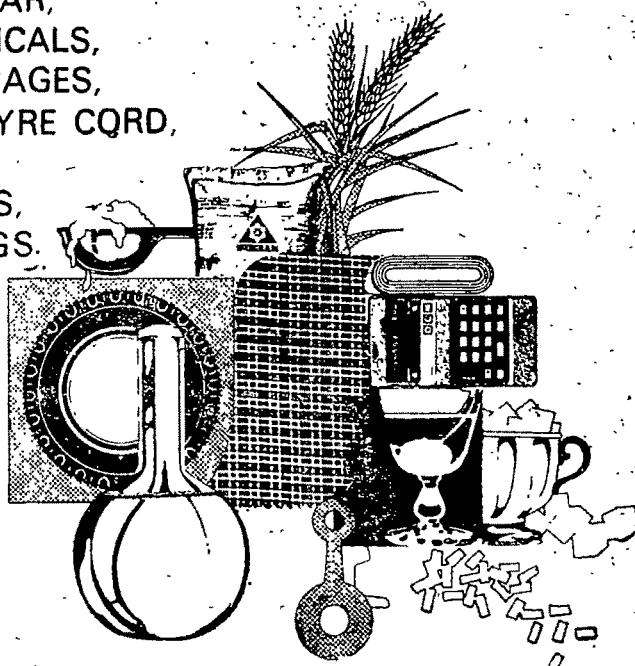
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Indian society, as a whole, and relevant to the present era. We need a new viewpoint.

It is not possible to define the new viewpoint for the simple reason that not enough people have yet defined their ideas. However, so many people are groping for a formulation that we may, perhaps, make a guess at the sort of position it may be.

In whatever way it may be expressed, it will be based on what amounts to a reformulation of the significance of human life. There will be transcendental or spiritual components, opposing the materialistic view of man propounded by scientists, and providing a rationale for modifying or even transcending the grossly egotistic and selfish life-aims of individualists. Current trends suggest that there is likely to be a widespread and popular re-appraisal of the evidence for survival of the human personality after death, and of similar factors which, though not of themselves of great importance, extend the co-ordinates of human significance. This will have repercussions upon the materialistic philosophies, on attitudes towards religion and, consequently, on morality. Such changes in popular attitudes are likely to begin amongst sections of society who, having obtained a high standard of living, are disillusioned of the idea that it, alone, is sufficient to ensure human satisfaction.

The viewpoint, then, may be one which affirms the transcendental significance of human life; affirms that there is a minimum level of material wellbeing needed for the animal *homo sapiens* to raise itself to full humanity, while denying that the scale of humanity can be measured in material terms; affirms the equality of all men in essence and the equality of human rights; and, while recognising that there are real inequalities in the development of human potential, aims to provide opportunity for equal development of that potential. In effect, it will affirm the validity of the mystical or spiritual elements in all religions, but will re-interpret their application to the cultural and behavioural components of social organisation.

It is not to be supposed that any such change in view would automatically modify the egotism, greed and selfishness which have motivated both manufacturer and consumer in the scramble for material goods. People in general want 'All This and Heaven Too'. In this context, what matters is not the presence of greed, which will always be present, but the degree to which people expect to be able to gratify it. Actual material shortages, exacerbated as they will be by the demands of a still rising and ever more vocal population, will set a compulsory limit on what any man may expect to have. Similarly, material shortages will check the illusion, bred by mass production and technology, that every man has the right to a wage level which allows him to enjoy all the conveniences and luxuries made possible by technology.

In this manner, we may expect psychological preparedness for change to develop simultaneously with developments in the physical situation which compel change. But it is not the physical compulsions which will determine the direction of change. Even were there to be no material shortages, the human soul would, at this point in human evolution, demand a change in the direction of more truly human aims.

So long as we felt that physical constraints were hampering development of our capacities, our search for knowledge and our search for meaningful life experience, it was right for us to work towards breaking those constraints. Plotted on a graph, the rising line of human development would be shown as closely following the line of material progress. However, starting from a few decades back, the line of human development would appear to have flattened off, even as technological development caused the line of material progress to curve upwards. In other words, the recent acceleration of material progress does not reflect a parallel advance in human evolutionary development.

Even though it is true that there are huge numbers of the world population, particularly in the deve-

loping countries, for whom material progress still represents a necessary stage in their evolution, and even though material shortages are likely to frustrate their growing demands and inhibit their development, it is the loss of direction in the advantaged leaders of the race that is producing the current sense of despair. Nowhere, except amongst the most bigoted believers in technology, is there any sense of enthusiasm, aspiration or adventure. A dull greyness hangs over the world, lit only by the red glow of people minting money. And this is because the light of truly human aspiration, the light of the spirit, is no longer being reflected in material and economic aims.

At any given time, only a few men are capable of turning directly to the search for fulfilment in the spiritual enquiry. For the race as a whole, the significance of life always seems to lie where the spirit is reflected in forms. But, when its reflection in a particular form has carried us as far as it can take us, and the time comes for us to leave the dimming reflection in one form and to seek it in another and higher form, our tendency to cling to the familiar results is an inertia that resists change.

At these times it is necessary to overcome the inertia. This involves challenging the validity of the current system's most deeply entrenched beliefs and the unquestioned premises whose rigidity kept the previous aim straight. In order to change, we must now introduce flexibility.

Apart from the actual sacred cows which are doing so much harm to the Indian rural environment, one of the most sacred of the metaphorical ones is the current economic system. Is there not much to be learned from the non-cash economy of the subsistence farmer, with its stress on the interdependence of man on man, co-operative effort, fair exchange, and a high degree of individual autonomy? Another sacred cow is the validity of our concepts of the right to live and to reproduce life. Has any man the right to produce children whose existence will deprive both them and other child-

ren of the means even to grow complete physical bodies? Are increased family incomes and old age security, supposedly provided by large families, justifications for dragging the whole community below the subsistence level? What sort of morality is it that says we *must not* prevent conception, *must* raise unwanted children, *must* maintain the miserably senile?

These are hard questions, questions that need to be answered in an already over-crowded world where we may soon be unable to support anyone who can contribute neither to his own nor to anyone else's welfare. Study anthropology, and one learns that the world as a whole has not shared the distorted Christian interpretation of the sanctity of human life in respect of prevention of conception, of abortion and even of infanticide. Yes. The motives for birth control are sometimes selfish, just as the motives for having large families are sometimes selfish. Can we afford to be concerned with private motives when the survival of civilisation is at stake?

In India we never truly faced these questions. We left them to be answered by famine, disease, floods, cyclones, communal riots and, more recently, by bride burnings and police firings. The impact of western medicine, western technology and the western style of monetary economy, all mixed up with the Christian ethic embodied in the legal code, is responsible for our burgeoning population. We must change our views on these subjects, or we perish.

Many people may feel that this issue of views and values is mere theory and is irrelevant to the immediate practical concerns which trouble us in India. For us the threat of social and administrative breakdown is imminent. We already have a situation in which people are seeking solutions to their social problems through violence, a situation in which a famine could spark communal killings as bad as the partition riots of 1947.

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At such a time we need clear, rational policies, especially in

respect of such a matter as population control. But we cannot have clear policies if our thinking is muddled. We cannot expect rationality from minds which cannot cut through the confused tangle of ancient tradition and modern theory to face the practical steps which existing conditions demand of us.

It is a principle of evolution that the survival of a species depends upon its capacity to adapt to changed circumstances. In the human sphere a similar principle operates in respect of adaptability to cultural change: the degree of social disturbance and of physical suffering associated with changing circumstances depends upon the flexibility of the social outlook. In this instance, if we can take upon ourselves the mental-cum-emotional pain attendant upon changing our standards of desirable family size and of the importance of having sons, then we shall better be able to avoid the famines, riots, migrations, slums, and other physical troubles associated with overpopulation.

The mass resentment against the brutalities of the Emergency vasectomy campaign was due to force being used on human beings where agreement should have been sought through education. Brutality is for brutes, and it evokes brutal responses. To evoke human responses, people must be persuaded to accept responsibility for exercising their human powers of decision in relation to reason and foresight. When a race leaves the control of its population size to natural forces, as was the case in India, it is, if only in this respect, still ruled by the same forces that rule animals. To assert our humanity, we have to take the responsibility for control upon ourselves.

It is for these reasons that human solutions to our practical problems must be related to human concepts, views and values, and that these must precede action and guide it. If we cannot find solutions which reflect our humanity and not our animality, then we must suffer the harsh consequences.

Even if we suppose that in India we can produce enough food to feed our hundreds of millions, and we suppose that human good sense, rather than our ineffectual family planning, checks population growth within the next fifty years, what sort of quality of life will there be? Do we expect high human qualities to emerge from the jobless and frustrated younger generations, from the *jhuggee* dwellers, from the occupants of crowded and characterless workers' tenements, or even from those cluttered jungles of middle-income-group housing estates which are swamping prime agricultural land around our cities, houses whose distorted, endlessly repeated forms seem guaranteed to distort the psyches of their tenants?

In the whole world have we no standard for the amount of space, privacy, quiet and exposure to natural beauty the creature *homo sapiens* needs if he is to develop human qualities? Are not these things also 'minimum needs'? Let us find more meaningful indices of human welfare than the GNP and the cost of living index. Let us find a more valid index of man's worth than the size of his cash income.

If we do not face these issues, what hope have we of saving our ship of life from foundering under the sheer weight of numbers. Even if we can formulate new human aims, what hope have we of setting a new course, of making those aims effective, unless we act before our cargo sinks us.

Not only in India, but over the whole world, mankind is at a crucial turning point. At such points in human history it cannot be predicted whether civilisation will change its course and survive, or whether it will be swamped by the hordes of the underprivileged it has spawned and plunge us back into another dark age. It cannot be predicted because it depends on the personal decisions of many individual men and women. Will we affirm our loyalty to our higher humanity, even if only with enlightened egotism, or will the threat of social insecurity make us tighten our hold on those outworn value systems which will drag us down?

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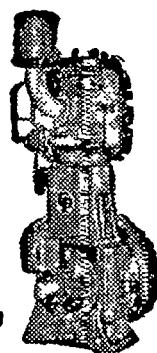
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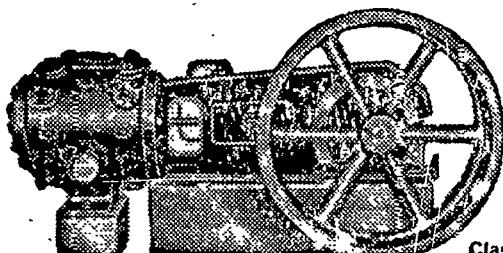
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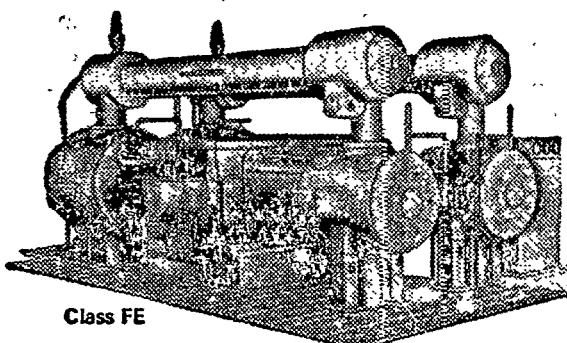
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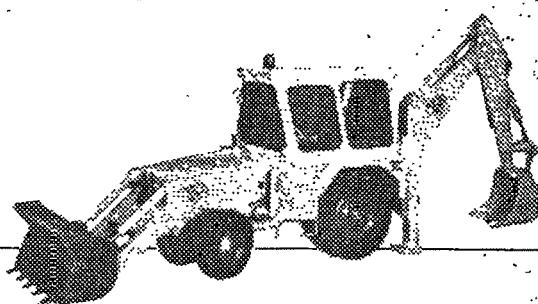
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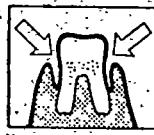
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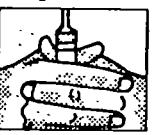
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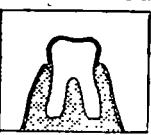
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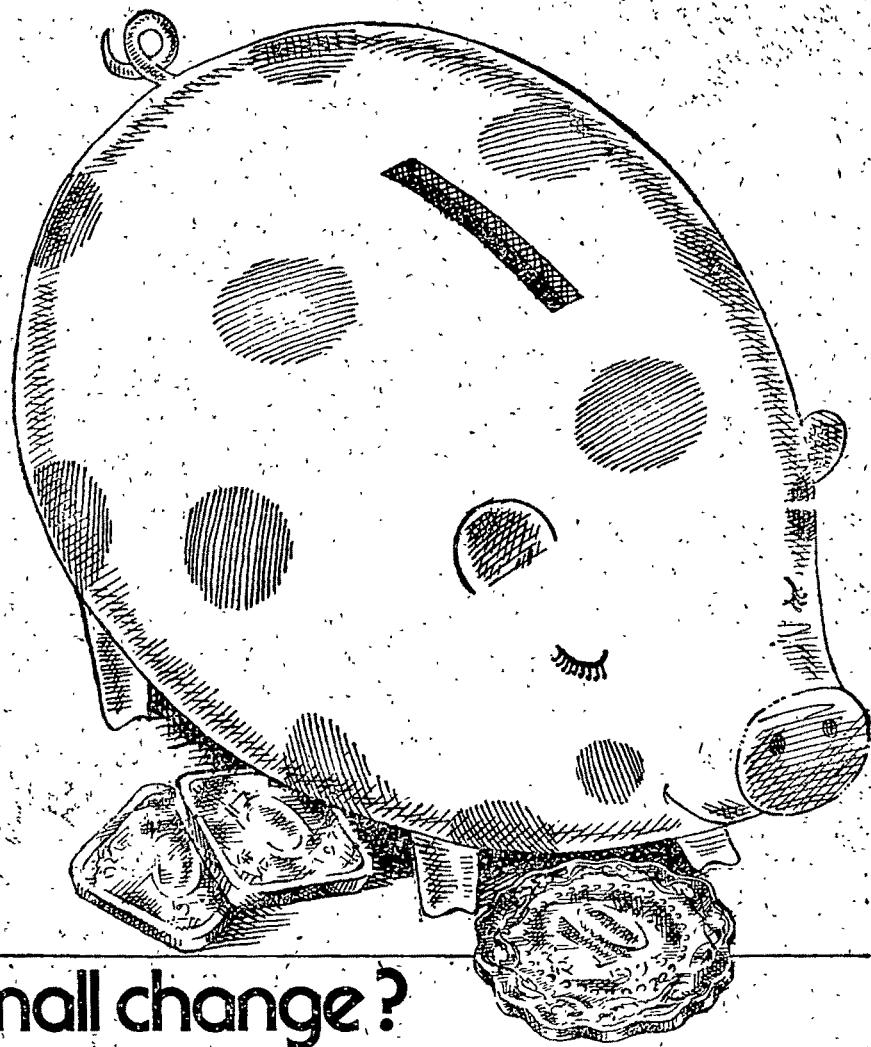


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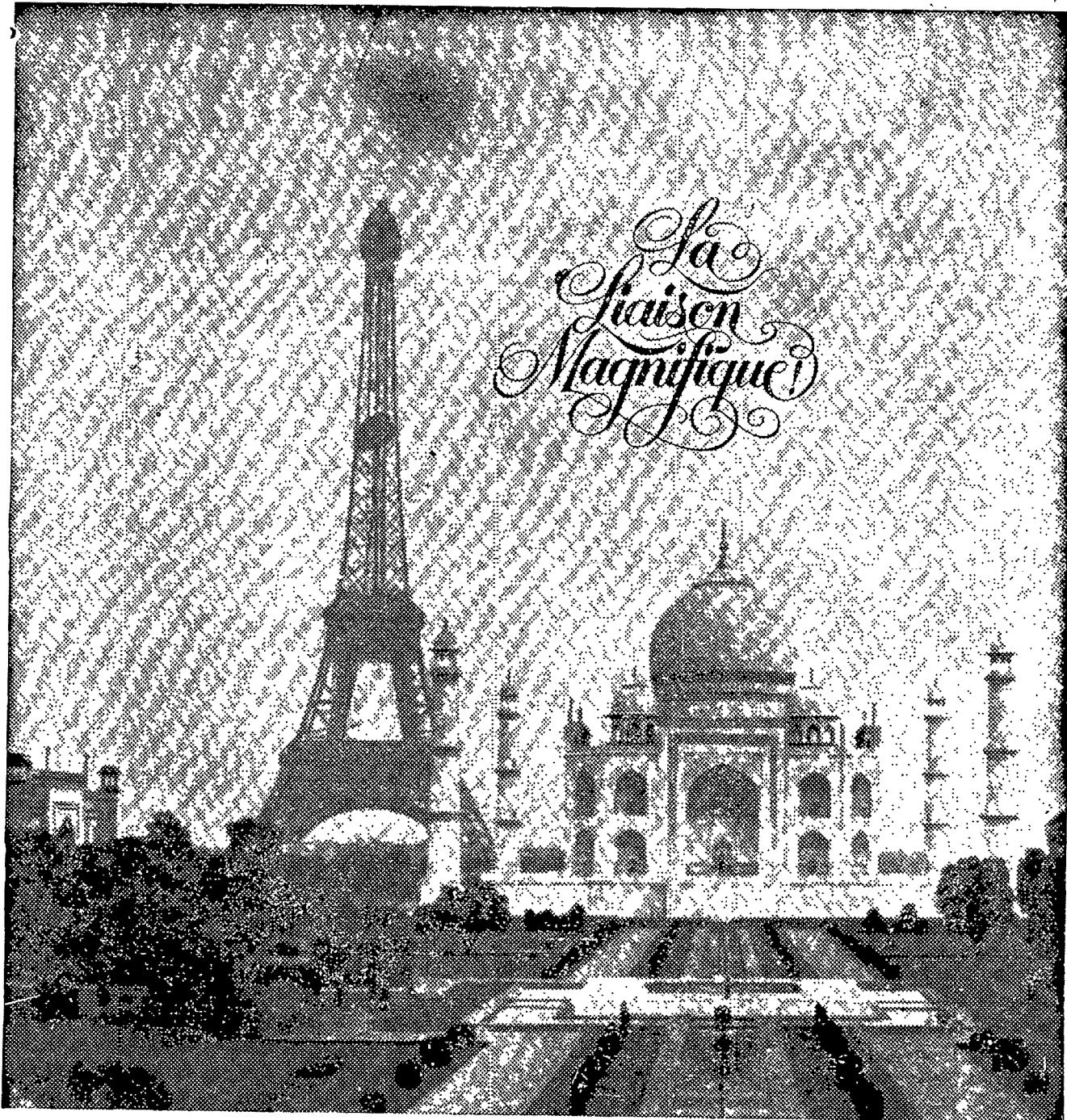
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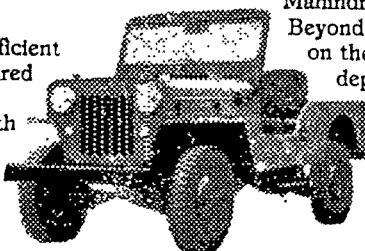


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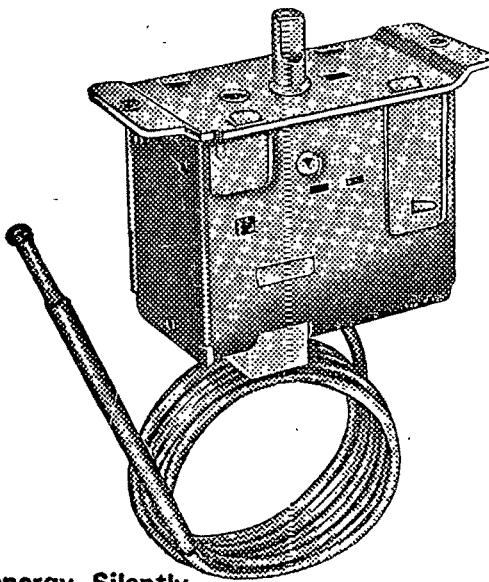
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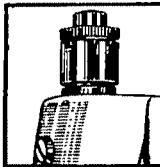
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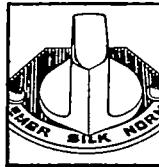


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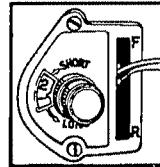
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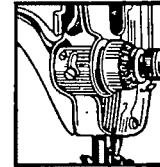
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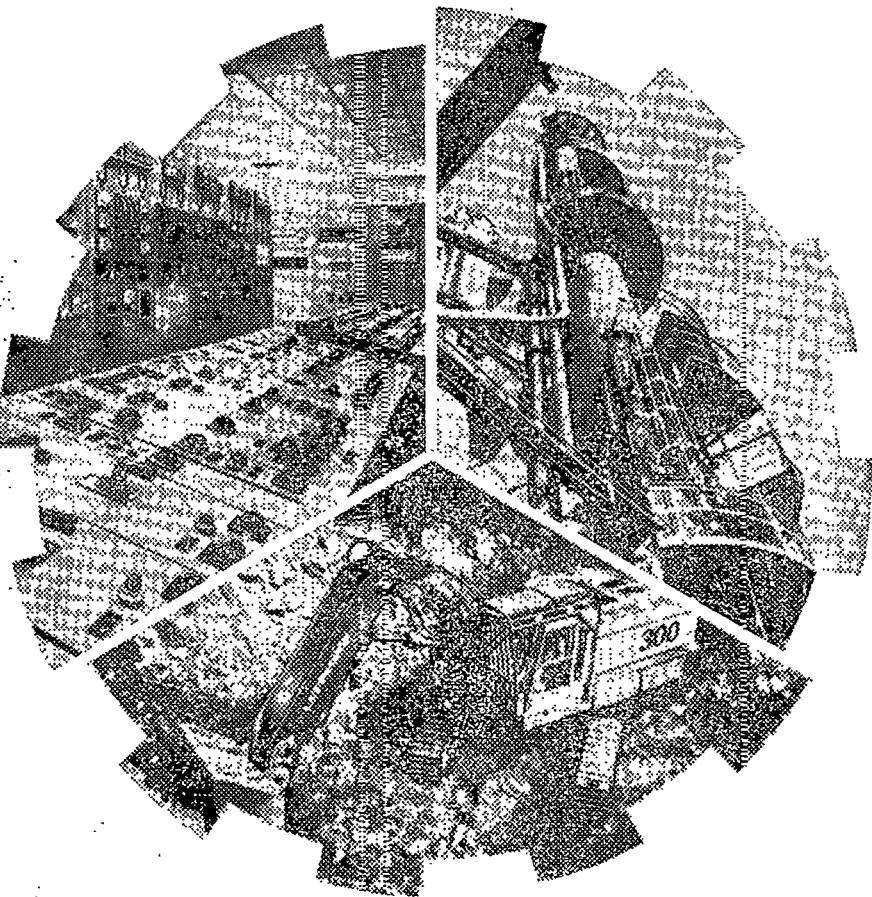
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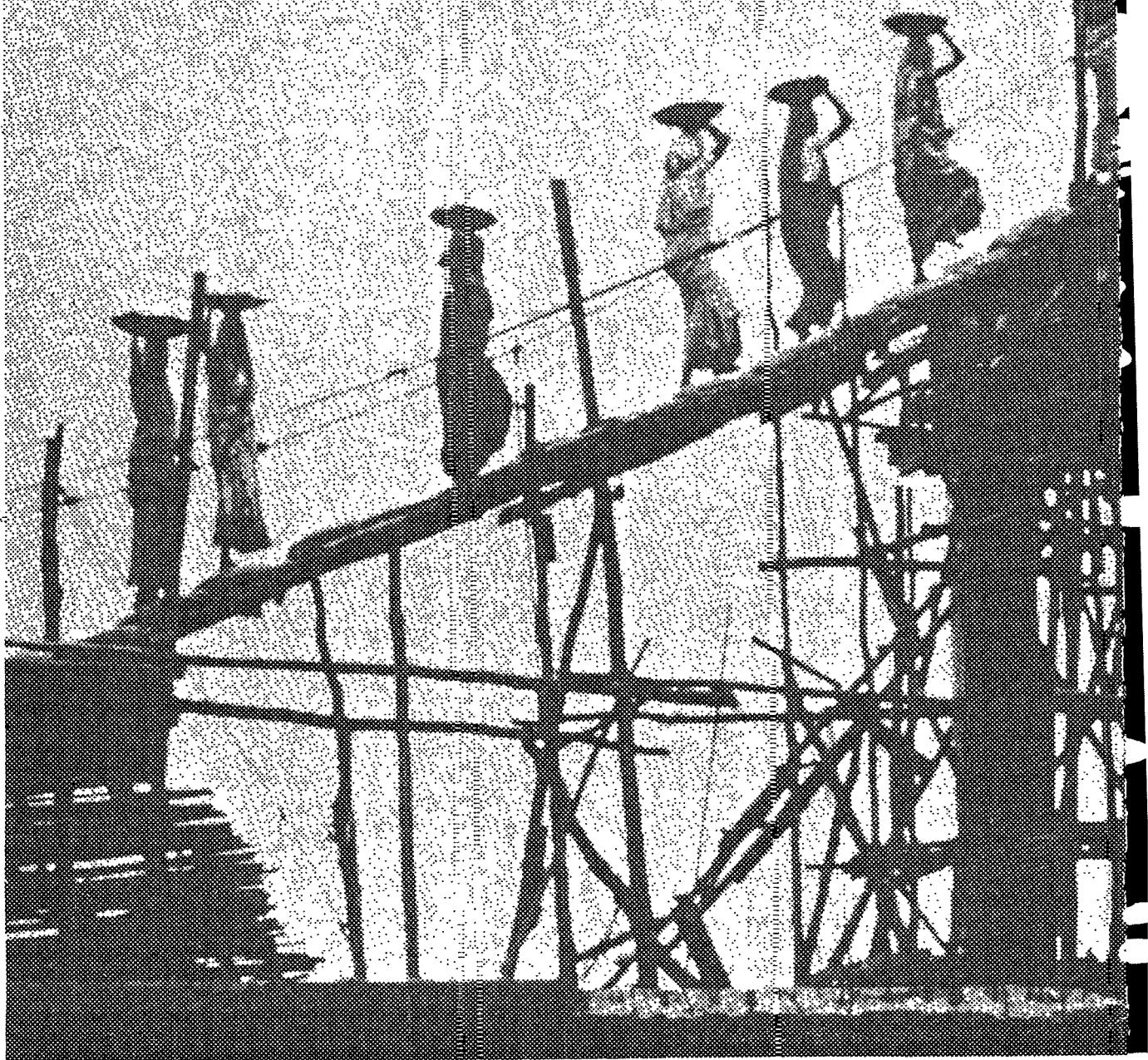


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Engineering, Ohio and E. Pestel, Former Minister
of Art and Sciences, Government of Lower Saxony,
Germany

A SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE

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COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

These papers are taken from the 1982 conference of
the Club of Rome. The theme was 'Approaching the
21st Century! Global Problems and Human Choices'.

The problem

WITH the end of this century, we are approaching also that of a millennium which saw a struggling humankind conquer the whole of the planet, and ascend from the dark ages to this shining threshold of a new era of knowledge and information. We feel that a momentous change of epoch is in the offing. While the new era may be full of promise, we fear that the very newness of the things that it fore-shadows will probably lead us to abandon familiar modes of life to which, for all their difficulties, we have become accustomed. And, we are also afraid that it will compel us to face complexities still greater than those we are barely able to live with nowadays and which we would like to see diminished, so as to have some respite and enjoy a simpler existence. Therefore, despite our deep yearning that our situation should take a turn for the better, we are diffident at too many changes, and puzzled and awed by the inscrutable character of an altogether novel future.

We realize on the other hand that the multiple crisis we are currently grappling with is unmistakably a sign that the forces and equilibria, which so far have in one way or another kept the human system together, are no longer able to accomplish this function adequately. The state of the world is precarious, and some large parts or sectors of it undeniably in bad shape and unfit to meet even present-day pressures. Therefore, a thorough assessment of the human condition and prospects at this turning point of history is indispensable and urgent.

Particularly important is the exploration of likely future alternatives. This should not be limited to the projection into the next decades of current trends with just some minor facelift. In fact, we probably are about to enter a period of serious discontinuities independent of our will. But, still more decisive is going to be the increased power that we will acquire to turn around some negative trends and improve the structure and governance of the human system, in order to bring about more favorable situations.

A sensible approach is, therefore, to start by making a careful evaluation of a range of developments which may stem from the present state of affairs by the sheer force of events if we do not radically change our postures; and then compare them with the alternative futures which are likely to emerge if we decide instead to reorganize and guide

our societies more responsibly, in consonance with the new realities of our time.

If we are to understand fully the complex evolutionary process affecting our enterprise, for better or for worse, we have however to consider the entire human system in its global span. To analyze only some regions of it, such as the industrial countries, as if they could in some way be isolated from the rest of the world, or just to concentrate on certain areas, such as the economy, the energy resources, or the military compound, independently from all other sectors, can be sorely misleading. It is true that to consider all regions and sectors in their basic inter-relatedness has never been attempted before, and that by adopting this method we have to accept some gross simplifications; but it is no less true that only in this way can we eventually gain a comprehensive overview of the system as a whole and of its overall dynamics. Our findings can then be refined through subsequent analyses.

What I want to stress is that, while thousands of things have to be done on all fronts in every region and nation to alleviate local problems and respond to immediate exigencies, only a holistic approach, and it alone, will permit us to attain two fundamental objectives.

- One is to discern which factors and phenomena are mainly responsible for the current turbulence and the ongoing or impending mutations that are changing altogether our position in the planet.
- The other is to stimulate the formation of the great synthetizing visions, motivations and ideas that can move people to accept the risks and sacrifices required to launch humanity in a new direction.

Any other approach can provide us only with a partial explanation of our predicament and just fragmentary elements utterly insufficient to envisage the vast and valid remedial action we have to undertake to redress our situation.

But what then is this situation? From studies promoted or carried out by The Club of Rome and others, it appears that three key sets of fairly recent and interlocking factors and phenomena are of paramount global importance in this transition

phase. They stand out among many others both because of the exceptional perturbing impact they have on the whole system, and because they find humankind culturally unprepared either to put them under reasonable control or to adjust to the shocks they provoke.

- These major elements of change are the following.
- The exponential growth of the world population not matched by a corresponding cultural evolution and by provisions to assure to all citizens a minimum standard of life.
 - The techno-scientific and industrial revolutions which have given us stupendous, previously unthinkable, knowledge and power, but not the wisdom to make good use of them.
 - Our changed relationship with nature, whose gifts we have always used, but which we now over-exploit without restraint.

In reviewing our dwindling situation, it is logical to consider first the enormous influence exerted by the changes that have occurred and are still very much under way in humankind's occupation of the earth. Such highly welcome developments as the sharp decrease in infant mortality and the virtual doubling of the lifespan have raised in their wake a host of large and complex problems. To grasp the real purport of these changes, one has to consider them in perspective.

After the appearance of our species, more than 10,000 centuries ago, its growth proceeded slowly but steadily, until the population reached 1.6 billion in the year 1900. Yet, since then, in only 80 years, numbers have practically trebled to the present 4.6 billion. And, now, barring a miracle or a catastrophe, still another giant jump can be expected in the next couple of decades, with the addition of a supplementary population bigger than that which accumulated in the previous 10,000 centuries. Thus, more than six billion people will have to be accommodated on the earth by the year 2000. And thereafter growth will continue.

This unparalleled human proliferation is flanked by two massive population shifts. While in the past the largest settlements were able to choose the richest lands, the situation is now reversed. Soon 80 per cent of humankind will be crammed in the less developed countries. Moreover, people always used

to live overwhelmingly in rural areas; but now they are leaving them. Rampant urbanization brings endless streams of peasants to the cities and townships, which altogether will account for about one half of the world's population by the end of the century.

We have yet to grasp all the consequences of this demographic earthquake. Meanwhile, ancillary phenomena are further complicating the problem. Let me just recall the senescence of the population in well-off countries at a time when in emerging nations there is an overflow of young people; the liberation of women which gives them a more active role in several societies; and the much greater mobility that large numbers of citizens have acquired in a shrinking world. What the cumulative impact of these quantitative transformations will be on our collective fate is indeed yet to be assessed.

We know what happens with other, non-human species. When faced by important modifications in their numbers or by alterations in their environment, they respond in a natural way, by and large adjusting their fertility and habits to the new conditions. We are supposedly more intelligent creatures, but for a long time we did practically nothing to provide for settling our swelling populations decently on the available land, or for keeping a reasonable and sustainable balance between people and natural resources. Even today, with almost one billion human beings living beneath the poverty line — a condition both morally and politically intolerable — there are no policies and strategies concerted at the international level to satisfy these primary requirements. For instance, rural and agricultural development, which should be in the forefront of our preoccupations, especially in large parts of the third world, is still very low in our priorities.

At the same time, while we recognize in the instinct for the conservation of the species an innate quality that lesser creatures have evolved to enhance their capacity to survive, we nurture a strong, even obsessive, national and class conscience, leaving instead our conscience of the species to fall into oblivion. It is decidedly queer that this should occur precisely when it is becoming quite evident that the more intensively humankind sprawls all over the earth, the more intertwined and inter-dependent it becomes. A point has in fact already been reached when all nations and peoples must be aware that

they are practically united for good or for evil by a common planetary destiny.

The inevitable conclusion one must draw from these considerations is that our phenomenal population growth unaccompanied by cultural preparedness and practical measures to stamp out hunger and poverty from the world, has thrown humankind into a quandary, and will destabilize it still more in the future. If we go on letting prejudice, animosity and discrimination motivate us, rather than being guided by tolerance, comprehension and solidarity, it will be impossible for six or more billion people to share equitably and peacefully our beautiful but small and vulnerable planet. Conflicts will be inevitable.

In other words, unless the present awkward contradictions and incongruities are eliminated by a profound cultural and behavioural evolution from the grassroots up, humanity will be condemned to suffer continuous lacerations and breakdowns. For, far from being a self-organizing, self-adjusting and self-perpetuating system, as we like to say today, it will become increasingly inflexible and unyielding. It will be a system so ridden by fatal internal dissensions, and one whose rigidity and resistance to change are so stubborn, that it will turn out to be unfit to forge ahead in a continuously changing world.

Ironically enough, these changes are man-made. Their fountain-head are the scientific, technological and industrial revolutions, which foster our non-stop 'progress'. This is a new kind of progress and represents the second major factor which differentiates this day and age from all past epochs. The extraordinary advances we have made in a number of fields put at our disposal an immense array of information, knowledge, equipment and tools which previous generations never even dreamt of. Thanks to them we build our communication, research, production, trade, transport, monetary, finance, and weapon systems which girdle the global. Their intricate and expanding network forms that 'technosphere' which symbolizes our civilization, and actually is the secular arm of our newest power which gives us ever more energy and goods, provides us with mechanical and electronic boons, and increases our outreach over natural resources.

The benefits we all derive from these advances are unprecedented and bewildering indeed. But, at the same time, this technosphere of our making is so formidable that it ends by overpowering and dwarfing us as human beings. Our jobs and our work—and leisure-hours, our consumer habits and our standard of life, our education and our information of disinformation, our very way of thinking and acting, all depend on it to an ever growing extent, as also does the possibility of our being threatened by war or being actually called to arms to wage it. We feel powerless and alienated when faced with this tremendous and abstruse machine of the modern age, a machine beneath whose imperium we are destined to lie, as anonymous pawns in a fantastic

game, the rules and ultimate objectives of which are, by and large, beyond our understanding.

There is yet another disquieting aspect in the triumphant outgrowth of our technosphere. This is its anarchical character. While its constituent artificial systems mutually influence and even strengthen one another, each of them behaves as a practically autonomous entity which responds to its own finality and rationale, quite independently of the others and of any overall human design or logic. Superimposed on the fractious political organization of the world, this congeries of systems creates a globally chaotic situation in which the awesome power we have acquired is all too often misused, abused or used recklessly, so that the stronger it becomes, the greater the danger or damage it can cause.

We need not go very far to find an example of this. The headway made in the mastery of nuclear energy and in the refinements of microprocessors has given incredible precision and reliability to our missiles with nuclear warheads, hence heightening the temptation, to which some human groups may fall, to use them to wipe out the 'enemy' in a first strike attack. The possibility of a nuclear holocaust is therefore much greater today than it was a few years back.

We may add that not even the ruling classes, which should know better, for they make the laws and sign the treaties, and decide on policies and strategies, seem to be aware of the magnitude of the task it behoves them to accomplish and the moral and intellectual leadership they are expected to show in carrying it out. Therefore, as things are going on now-a-days, crises are likely to pile upon crises, making human affairs ever more unmanageable. The fact that humankind lacks the wisdom and even the plain commonsense to use its marvellous knowledge and power sagely and prudently, confirms the conclusion that at present it does not find itself in a position to bring about eventually that mature and responsible society which is a precondition for its own survival.

Profound societal changes are therefore needed. As already mentioned, the solution to our problems can only be found within ourselves. Unless and until all of us — wherever we make our home on the planet, and whatever our present condition might be — learn how to live and how to think and act on a par with the real world, our common future can only be dark and tempestuous, if not tragic.

The third and gravest phenomenon we are witnessing is that the technosphere we have created in this corner of the universe is on a direct collision course with the earth's biosphere. Our encroachment on the world of life is becoming more serious every year. We exploit renewable and non-renewable natural resources to the maximum, polluting and impoverishing our terrestrial environment and impairing its life-supporting capacity. The sad-

dening situation of advancing deserts, land erosion, decimation of forests, overfishing, overgrazing, extinction of species, acid rains, emission of carbon dioxide and particles into the atmosphere, and depletion of the protective ozone layer at the high altitudes, as well as the consequences of other ecological offences and outrages we are perpetrating daily, are too well known to require comment here.

For the first time, the natural systems and cycles that preside over the evolution of life are confronted with artificial factors which can victoriously compete with them on a mass scale for space and resources, and which end by playing havoc with them. These powerful artificial intruders are bearers of degenerative characters, for they do not possess those self-regulating, self-adjusting homeostatic qualities which are 'the wisdom of nature'. Human systems need human regulation; but more often than not this is either absent or deficient. The time has thus come to realize that, if the material revolutions continue their random, torrential, unrestrained 'progress', they may completely rock not only the great artificial systems man has painstakingly created, but also the natural systems on which his very existence depends.

We are all, directly or indirectly, the culprits and victims of this unfortunate state of affairs. Its origin can probably be traced back to our mistaken conception of man's place on earth and the belief that this gives him absolute rights over all life and riches the planet may hold in its supposedly unlimited cornucopia. These wrong premises prompt us to behave like a greedy tyrant intent on overtaxing his domain in order to squeeze as much as possible out of it right now, thereby stupidly destroying the very bases of his life tomorrow.

Once more, the conclusion is that we can be saved from ourselves only by a profound cultural evolution which will uplift and update our appreciation of the pitfalls and opportunities, as well as of the challenges and responsibilities, that are inherent in the dominant position we have attained on the globe. This new vision must stress the first and foremost imperative that our existence has to be one of alliance and harmony with nature, of which we are part and parcel and on which we have finally to rely for survival and quality of life.

This cursory review of the major factors of change in the world, although certainly not exhaustive, is quite sufficient to reveal how present-day humanity is incapable of responding to the internal and external mutations it itself engenders. The extreme dangers deriving from this human crisis are decried by scientists and political and spiritual leaders throughout the world. But there are no proposals for a comprehensive analysis of the root causes of this situation, nor for the radical remedies so urgently required by its continuous worsening. On the contrary, even in this moment of dire need, each nation or class and each ideological group or political party is too engrossed in defending its

immediate interests and propounding its own particular arguments to give much weight to the fate of humanity as a whole — a fate that every one of us will ultimately share.

Yet, if we join our forces — and this is the essential message I want to leave with you — we possess all the cognitive, intellectual and material means as well as the moral energies required to change the course of history and steer it toward a better and more secure future for the entire human family. The enormity of the task may frighten us. But we should not be deterred. For several years now, The Club of Rome has been stressing that it is possible to develop the great latent capacities of the human being and, by this, open the way to get out of the blind alley in which we find ourselves at the apex of our material civilization.

In every man and woman there exists an unexploited but invaluable potential of understanding, imagination, creativity and innovation, a capacity of tolerance of, and conviviality and solidarity with, other people, and even a fund of compassion and respect for the non-human forms of life. There is also a profound yearning for a greater partnership with nature generally and communion with what transcends it. The enlightened use of this human potential is a prerequisite for the improvement of our political, social and environmental condition.

Since people are the true protagonists of the human venture, economic, scientific, technological and institutional developments — however important, nay, indispensable —, can only be secondary and complementary to human development. There is therefore no greater ethical and existential obligation for all of us than that of committing ourselves to this goal.

It is in hours of uncertainty and disarray like this that the human quality can best assert itself, and that we must redouble our efforts to find the paths leading to a future worth living. The search and research for these options and these paths are uncommonly complex and difficult, and will require all our resolve. We will however have, for the first time in our history, an extraordinary tool at our disposal, represented by our new capacity of fully mastering all information available. We can now gather, collate, correlate, organize, store, retrieve and make use of immense quantities of data that heretofore were dispersed, unreachable and, therefore, practically useless; and we are thus in a position to undertake the exploration of the alternatives of the human future, an enterprise that in the past would have been looked at as totally utopian.

But the basic fact is that it is up to us to decide. And to decide well, I feel, has become a commitment that our generations can no longer forsake, or leave to our successors. The human future depends upon the human choices made today and those to be made from now on.

AURELIO PECCEI

Organic and sustainable growth

M. MESAROVIC and E. PESTEL

MANY of the national and international crises, some engulfing the total world, have — with special emphasis since the publication of *The Limits to Growth* — been attributed to continuous and rapid economic growth. It has been argued, therefore, that growth must be stopped — or, at the very least, deliberately retarded. Conversely, it has also been maintained that solutions of the world crises could be found only through continued growth. The fact is that both of these points of view require a great deal of qualification and more explicit definition before either one can be accepted as correct on a rational — rather than an ideological or emotional — basis. In other words, we need to know what is meant by 'growth', and in what sense that growth is considered as desirable or undesirable. Growth, after all, is a process, not an object; it cannot be pointed at physically like a chair or table, for the sake of explication; rather, it must be conceptually defined.

But, defining growth (especially in support of positions 'for' or 'against' growth) is not necessarily straightforward as the confusion characteristic of current debate on growth or non-growth indicates. On certain growth issues there would seem to exist universal agreement. Consider, for example, the issue of population growth. Few would quarrel with the position that the global population cannot and should not be permitted

to grow unchecked forever. That the population must level off some time, i.e., that population growth should stop, is the view gaining universal acceptance. On the other hand, none would argue against growth in medical services leading to increased life expectancy and declining mortality rates; but this leads to increase rather than decline in population.

The area of material consumption provides yet another example of the complexity of the growth issue and highlights the peril in taking a stand for or against growth as an abstract concept. It is a well-established fact that in the world's developed, industrialized regions material consumption has reached proportions of preposterous waste. In those regions there must now be a relative decline in the use of various materials. On the other hand, in some other less fully developed world regions, there must be substantial growth in the use of some essential commodities, either for food production or for industrial production. The very existence of the population in those regions depends on such growth. Hence, unqualified arguments 'for' or 'against' growth are naive; to grow or not to grow is neither a well-defined nor a relevant question until the location, sense, and subject of growing and the growth process itself are defined.

To appreciate how rich and varied the concept of growth is, one has to

recall the growth processes as found in nature. Two types of growth processes are of interest here: one is undifferentiated growth, the other is organic growth, or growth with differentiation. In the undifferentiated type, growth occurs through replication of cells by cell division: one cell divides into two, two into four, four into eight, and so on until, very rapidly, there are millions and billions of cells. For example, if the doubling time is one hour, the first cell will have become nearly 17 million cells after twenty-four hours, while after forty-eight hours there would be more than 280 trillion (280,000,000,000,000) cells. In undifferentiated growth all of the new cells are replicas of the first; growth is a quantity only. The result is a purely exponential increase of the cells' numbers.

Organic growth, in contrast, involves a process of differentiation, which means that various groups of cells begin to differ in structure and function. The cells become organ-specific according to the developmental process of the organism: liver cells become distinct from brain cells; brain cells are differentiated from the bone cells, etc. During and after differentiation, guided by an inherent master plan, the number of cells can still increase and the organs grow in size; but while some organs grow, others might decline.

In this context, it is interesting to note that the equilibrium reached in organic growth is dynamic, not static. This is so because in a mature living organism, the body is constantly being renovated. A human body, for example, renovates itself approximately every seven years.

The analogy between the organic growth of an organism and that of the world system is, of course, only an analogy. It refers to the specialization of various parts of an organic system, to the functional interdependence between its constituent parts in the sense that none of them is self-contained but, rather, each has to fulfill a role assigned through historical evolution, and to the existence of a master plan to define the goal and destination of organic

development and growth. However, the analogy shows vividly the immensity of change in magnitude and in kind which is needed for mankind to start on a new course of global world development.

In the past, the world community was merely a collection of fundamentally independent parts. Under such conditions each of the parts could grow — for better or worse — as it pleased. In the new conditions, exemplified by the global crises-syndrome, the world community has been transformed into a world system, i.e., a collection of functionally interdependent parts. Each part — whether a nation or a group of nations — has its own contribution to make to the organic development of mankind: resources, technology, economic potential, culture, etc. In such a system, the growth of any one part depends on the growth or non-growth of others. Hence, the undesirable growth of any one part threatens not only that part but the whole as well. If the world system could embark on the path of organic growth, however, the organic inter-relationships would act as a check against undifferentiated growth anywhere in the system.

If the concept of growth were restricted solely to undifferentiated growth, there would be no question but that the growth process — practically all growth processes — would have to stop eventually. One does not need any complicated analysis to arrive at that conclusion. It is easy to see why. If, for example, an economy grows at a 5 per cent annual rate, it would, by the end of the next century, reach a level more than 500 times greater (or 50,000 per cent higher) than the current level. Even if the use of materials were to decline sharply in relation to the rise in economic output, the problems of acquiring, processing, and disposing of the materials would be staggering. Even the leaders of growth-oriented enterprises realize this. Growth for growth's sake in the sense of ever increasing numbers and larger size simply cannot continue forever.

On the basis of that irrefutable diagnosis, a prescription of no-growth administered immediately

and worldwide might seem to be indicated. And, indeed, such a prescription might serve admirably — if the world were a uniform entity, which it is not; and if the world could be counted on to evolve into a uniform, one-world entity, which cannot and ought not to happen; and if growth and development could be measured along a single dimension for the entire world, which cannot be done. In fact, growth occurs at varying rates along different paths in different parts of the world. While undifferentiated growth is assuming truly cancerous qualities in some parts of the world, the very existence of man is threatened daily in some other part by lack of growth; e.g., in regional food production.

It is this pattern of unbalanced and undifferentiated growth which is at the heart of the most urgent problems facing humanity — and a path which leads to a solution is that of organic growth.

In nature, organic growth proceeds according to a 'master plan'; a 'blue-print'. According to this master plan, diversification among cells is determined by the requirements of the various organs; the size and shape of the organs; and, therefore, their growth processes are determined by their function, which in turn depends on the needs of the whole organism.

Such a 'master plan' is missing from the processes of growth and development of the world system. The master plan that regulates the growth of an organism has evolved through the process of natural selection; it is encoded in the genes and is given from the start to the growing organism, so that development of the organism is specified by it; the plan and the organism are inseparable.

But, the organic growth of mankind is not inherent in the present trend of world development. There is nothing to suggest that the transition from un-differentiated to organic growth will result from the present direction of development. Nor can it be assumed that such a plan will be injected by a 'deus ex machina'. The master plan has yet

to evolve through the exercise of options by the people who constitute the world system. To this extent, the options facing humanity contain the genesis of an organic growth. And it is in this sense that mankind is at a turning point in its history: to continue along the path of cancerous undifferentiated growth or to start on the path of organic growth.

The transition from the present undifferentiated and unbalanced world growth to organic growth will lead to the creation of a new mankind. Such a transition would represent a dawn, not a doom, a beginning, not the end.

And eight years ago we asked here the question: 'Will mankind have the wisdom and will-power to evolve a sound strategy to achieve that transition? In view of historical precedents, one might, legitimately, have serious doubts — unless the transition evolves out of necessity. And this is where the current and future crises — in energy, food, materials, and the rest — can become error-detectors, catalysts for change and, as such, blessings in disguise. The solutions of these crises will determine on which of the two paths mankind has chosen to travel.'

Change in the course of world development from undifferentiated to organic growth would have been a matter of choice and good-will rather than of necessity, if the world had not evolved into a state in which nations and regions from all over the globe not merely influence but strongly depend on each other. Contributing to this transition, in addition to the traditional political, ideological and economic ties, are new global world problems specific for our era such as worldwide dependence on a common stock of raw materials; problems in providing energy and food supply, sharing of the common physical environment on land, sea, and air, etc. The world community appears as a 'system' by which we mean collection of interdependent parts rather than merely a group of largely independent entities as was the case in the past. And, as a consequence, a disturbance of the normal state of affairs

in any part of the world quickly spreads all over the world, as many recent events unmistakably show.

All contemporary experience points to the reality of an emerging world system in the widest sense, which demands that all actions on major issues anywhere in the world be taken in a global context and with full consideration of multidisciplinary aspects. Moreover, due to the extended dynamics of the world system and the magnitude of current and future change, such actions have to be anticipatory so that adequate remedies can become operational before the crises evolve to their full scope and force.

Now some more detailed explanations as to what is required in order to achieve organic growth and development.

As there will be in nature no healthy development without a master plan, there will not be sustainable development of humankind without the existence of identifiable goals which, of course, have to satisfy a number of conditions. First of all, the various goal-concepts must be compatible with each other. Furthermore, they have to serve the true needs and wants of the people concerned, and they must be capable of enduring sustainable achievement in the face of the existing human and material resources. Since these vary greatly in different parts of the world, it is natural that organic development will take place in quite a different manner in the diverse regions of the world. Besides, as needs and wants as well as the disposable resources will undergo change as time goes by, so the goals will need to be redefined in the course of time.

Therefore, most goals are valid only for a limited period and, hence, every new generation faces the task to reformulate the goals for shaping the life of the next generation; a responsibility to which Friedrich Schiller, the great German poet, referred most impressively in the last sentences of his inaugural lecture at the University of Jena in the fateful year of the French Revolution 1789: '...and who among you, blessed with a caring heart and an

open intelligent mind, who can no longer pay his gratitude to his parents and ancestors, could abstain from doing so by working for the benefit of generations to come? Whatever your position may be in your future life, you all can do your share.'

Only if we orientate our political actions with respect to goals to be attained 10, 20, 30 years from now, can we take appropriate steps that also make proper use of past experience. Here we shall, however, find out that many steps which appear to be optimal in the short run, will have to be rejected because others that at first glance present themselves only as second or third choice would in the long term be truly useful and beneficial. This constitutes a formidable problem, not only for the political decision-maker in a parliamentary democracy, but also for those responsible for our economic development and, last but not least, for the individual citizen.

Fundamentally speaking, in order to be able to plan for organic and sustainable development, we need to establish new rules of cooperation which must be recognized and respected not only within nations, but also in the conduct of our international affairs.

We should not be surprised if the critical listener would interpret the above ideas concerning the general realization of organic development as heading eventually to a government based on a vast bureaucracy, not only in the executive branches of the administration, but also in the planning departments, stifling all private initiative and enterprise. Nothing would be farther away from our intentions. On the contrary, we believe that the State should definitely refrain from running industry and social institutions, etc., and from interfering unduly on the market, but it must have the vision and the courage to provide a political, economic and social framework, such that individuals as well as groups of citizens will be blessed with enduring economic and political success, who through their conduct promote organic development and growth in the national, regional

and international domain. We are convinced that then the initiative and inventiveness of private enterprise can effect general change towards a long-term positive development, even though some disadvantages and hardships would have to be accepted in the short-run.

The ideas expounded so far concerning the concept of organic and sustainable growth and development as well as concerning the necessary conditions for its realization are, of course, rather abstract. The policy-maker, whether he or she carries responsibility in a developing country or in an industrialized nation, will want to know what actually ought to be done in accordance with this concept regarding the problems and issues that he or she is confronted with. For anyone who wants to embark on the path of organic growth, where the first vital step consists in setting forth a master plan defining the goals, say, for the next 20 years, it is imperative that he or she takes a sober realistic look at the political, social and economic national and international environment in which he or she has to operate.

In the first place, the truth must be faced that there will be no magic international authority that will solve the problems, be they national, international or global. It would be utopian to expect that in the decades to come the nation-States would melt away into forming one world, subject to a one-world-authority. On the contrary, national selfishness will remain, maybe somewhat mitigated by the realization that we are all in the same boat or, rather, in the same spaceship. Let us be clear: the very existence of the nation-State requires that the bulk of its problems — from growing food to providing gainful employment — are solved at home by the efforts of its own citizens.

The heads of State, in particular, should be aware of the following truth. The more a nation-State enjoys among its citizens a group-cooperative spirit; the more a political governance is at work, based on a responsibility-sharing — consensual attitude among the political representatives in its political insti-

tutions; and the more its economic system is characterized by concerted free enterprise, the more successful will be the development of its society, as exemplified so far best in Japan after the Second World War.

The conditions for economic efficiency and organic growth are not simply the availability of human and material resources and a favourable external environment or respectively the political power to influence this external environment; rather, the comprehensive nature of the societal order, with its three components, values, political governance and economic system, is the key determinant for the level of societal effectiveness. For, otherwise the Soviet Union would be economically many times more effective than Japan, whereas the opposite is true. A rich natural resource endowment is most helpful, but not indispensable, since economic development is essentially man-made. What counts most, is: the will to work; technical and organizational know-how; and physical as well as service infrastructures.

In order that the will to work be sustained; that the know-how be constantly renewed, disseminated and implemented; and that adequate rates of investment are provided for the creation and maintenance of the physical and service infrastructures, the societal order has to be right...

It is here that we recognize shortcomings and outright failures in most industrialized countries in the West and East as well as in most developing countries. The more pronounced the incompatibilities between the components of the societal order are in a nation-State, the less will it be able to realize its potential for beneficial progress and organic growth.

Let me make here a few remarks about likely developments in the western industrialized countries whose situation today is not unlike their predicament 50 years ago: then also we had massive unemployment everywhere, an enormous recession coupled with inflation, the beginning of a new arms-race, rising adversarial political polarization

within the countries. Will all this lead in the 80s to a new world war as it did in the 30s, only this time with the prospect of mutual annihilation of the industrialized world — at least of western Europe?

I consider this most unlikely to be initiated in the 'West'. First, there are no aggressive dictatorships in the West and, though troubled by many serious problems, there is nowhere in the foreseeable future a chance for the establishment of a totalitarian regime in any of these countries. The pluralistic nature of their societies will not permit this. They are open for change of their values without cataclysmic events, although for some time they will be out of tune with what actually is required to deal with the present situation effectively, or at least to display their full potential in resolving the problems that face them. It will take them longer than necessary to undertake the many structural changes in governance as well as in the economy. The tendency to muddle through will persist longer than is good for them. Technological measures, for example, in the energy field, will be postponed to the last minute, because short-term pragmatism, reinforced by short election cycles, will still prevail among the political decision-makers who will be forced to continue to exercise their power on the basis of very fragile parliamentary majorities.

Hence, there will neither be the foresight nor the courage to set long-term goals so long as the people accord political success to politicians who act like mediocre players in a tennis match who, in order to win, concentrate on returning the ball safely rather than gain the initiative by risky shots. Still, free enterprise will see to it that technological progress continues on a strong foundation of research and development, and it will also see to it that the will to innovate will not stop within the coming decades. Microelectronics and biotechnology, including genetic engineering, will continue to advance, but its impact on society in the coming decade will remain far behind the fears of the technological sceptics as well as behind the hopes of those who

believe in the limitless possibilities of technology for the benefit of mankind.

I have no doubt that energy and other material resource-constraints can be mastered in the western industrialized countries as they occur. However, the tremendous waste of human ingenuity and effort as well as of material resources due to the armament race will divert so much away from development aid and also from the pressing need for improvement of their own social infrastructure and their physical environment, that the economic gap between the West and the developing countries will probably widen, while at the same time — despite economic growth — the quality of life, the satisfaction of the population with their living conditions will not improve in the western industrialized countries.

On the whole, I believe that the downward economic trend which we witnessed particularly in the latter part of the 70s will be arrested in the coming decade with a possible upswing in the 90s so far as the industrialized countries of the West are concerned.

This prediction, however, depends on a number of conditions. First of all, the rise in unemployment which for the 24 rather affluent countries of the OECD is now approaching the 30 million-mark, i.e., about 8 per cent of the total labour force, must be reversed; furthermore, productivity must be raised in 'honest' terms, i.e., labour productivity is to be related not to the labour force in paid employment, but to the total potential labour force, because productivity gains achieved through involuntary unemployment cannot be regarded as a positive symptom; and the same negative appraisal holds for productivity gains at the expense of the environment as well as of social well-being and health, in short, of the quality of life.

Good management of high productivity growth will in the future depend to a great extent on whether the gains are distributed in such a way that the demand for goods and services rises sufficiently to support the high economic activity which

can be achieved through the technologically possible productivity increase.

It would be tempting to undertake a similar broad brush appraisal of the future development of the other world-regions. Time and space limitations force us to forego such temptation. However, the attempt will be undertaken to offer a similar brief case-study concerning Tropical Africa which forms a stark contrast to the western industrialised regions. Tropical Africa consists of nearly 40 nation-States of widely varying size of territory, with a predominantly black population. There are States rich in resources: oil in Nigeria, great mineral wealth in Zaire, copper in Zambia etc.; and there are other countries, particularly in the Sahara and the Sahel belt that are practically without any natural resources. It is quite difficult to state anything definite about their societal order. As to values, there is a traditional inclination to seek consensus on the tribal level, and at the same time there prevails extreme intolerance between tribes, occasionally with a propensity to genocide.

Concerning political governance, military or 'socialist' regimes not tolerating any opposition are predominant; and, correspondingly, the economic system — if such a term could be applied at all — is State-controlled and, in the case of the small countries, controlled by the 'leader'; the control changing hands as the leaders change.

The average standard of living, being already on the bottom-line in the world, will even decline further, judged by the development of the per capita income as calculated with the aid of the Mesarovic-Pestel world model. This is due to the fact that, overall, the population will grow faster (by about 200 million between 1975 and the year 2000) than the aggregated GNP. The undoubtedly large potential of some of the larger African States, e.g., of the Sudan as the granary for the Arab world whose population will also double within the next 30 to 40 years (up to about 300 million), will not be reached in decades. Population growth in the poorest coun-

tries like those bordering on the Sahara, which due to overgrazing, unsustainable grain farming and firewood gathering moves further south every year, will probably be stopped through famines that will increase the mortality rate, especially among children.

Unless the approximately 40 nation-States in Black Africa do not form two or three large regional communities to which they surrender essential political sovereign rights, particularly in the field of economic policy, disastrous developments are in store for most of the smaller countries which could be averted only through constant food aid from the industrialized nations. Already in 1974 (see the Second Report to the Club of Rome 'Mankind at the Turning Point') the authors, based upon ideas supplied by our late friend, Maurice Guernier, stressed this point in the following way: 'since the change is to be brought about by man, there must exist a framework conducive to development in the desired direction.'

As already pointed out before, our analysis of the world system has indicated quite clearly that the most preferable solutions always involve harmony or compromise among balanced participants. But there is no balance between participants like the United States or the Soviet Union on the one hand and Dahomey or Singapore on the other hand. In order to achieve balance between regions in global development, a more coherent regional outlook must be developed in various parts of the world so that the preferable solutions will be arrived at of necessity rather than out of goodwill, a quality not common even among those who can afford it.

We are not talking of any regional regulation. Indeed, such a trend would be in contradiction to the need for change, and most probably would make it impossible. Rather, we are talking about a regional sense of common destiny that will find its expression through appropriate societal, economic and political arrangements, and through the formation of economic concepts and objectives. Such a regional out-

look will create a critical mass necessary for the practical implementation of new and innovative ways of functioning in cultural, economic and agricultural areas, especially on the rural level. Instead of trying to outperform the developed world by traversing the same path in a much shorter time, various regions should develop their own ways and means, as well as methods, to absorb most effectively whatever is transferred from the developed world in money or in kind.

These and other case studies not presented here, permit a variety of conclusions which in broad terms describe also the conditions for achieving at least a semblance of a master plan for organic and sustainable growth and development.

First of all, the conclusions confirm our premise that neither the assumption of global resource-abundance and a predication of the power of technology to solve all the world's problems nor the opposite assertions contribute anything relevant to the solution of the global problématique, even if only orientation is sought concerning the economic development in the various world regions. Hence, it is rather unimportant to speculate about future progress in technology and science.

Of course, fierce competition between the advanced industrialized countries will keep on fuelling technical and scientific progress. But the kind of technology resulting from this advance will — though only slightly — increase the wealth solely of the anyhow relatively rich nations. It will, furthermore, have the consequence that those who would step out of this competition would suffer greatly economically. On the other hand, this modern technology will have little, if any, relevance for the alleviation of the plight of the billions of people of today and tomorrow in the poor developing countries.

Secondly, our case studies make it abundantly clear that the development of the human quality everywhere, in rich and poor countries alike, is a prerequisite for avoiding cataclysmic developments. And this

does not imply just training for useful professions and jobs; even more important is education for all — irrespective of nationality, race or social level — to adopt group-cooperative values, so that individuals seek to play their proper role, to fulfill their obligations through cooperative interaction with others.

This may sound old-fashioned. But I have no doubt that modern conflict-pedagogics is poison for the young people in a world that can survive solely on the basis of voluntary cooperation. Only values based more on mutual obligations, responsibility and loyalty than on mutual advantage will find their match in a political governance and in an economic system that will give the nation-State the chance to realize fully its social and economic potential.

And, thirdly, despite the ever more deepening imprint which interdependence between nations and regions leaves on the development of individual nation-States, there can be no doubt that the question of success or failure of a sustainable organic development is decided on the 'home front'. To derive from this statement the conclusion that development aid will not accomplish anything in the long run, would be probably a gross distortion of the truth and untenable on political as well as on moral grounds. On the other hand, foreign aid limited to the purpose that the recipient of such aid can later help himself without further outside aid, is surely the right approach. The level at which this can be achieved is certainly a matter of debate and without doubt quite different for different developing countries.

In nations where even high sustained levels of foreign aid do not suffice to reach the take-off point in the foreseeable future, only a political and economic union of nation-States in the same region will be able to cure the situation in a durable way. The world could in my opinion benefit greatly from the formation of 10 to 15 world regions, and this not only from an economical point of view, but also on political grounds. Many of the armed conflicts that the world had to wit-

ness for the past 30 years would probably not have taken place, had the world already at an earlier stage organized itself in the proposed way.

Fourthly, in each nation-State and in all communities of nations, anticipatory adjustment procedures and mechanisms must be developed to deal with a stream of crises, which might well come in increasingly short succession, as the results of the 'Mankind at the Turning Point' studies indicate. The hazardous complexity of modern society, of the social, economic and political structure on the national as well as on the international scale, is far greater than that of a large nuclear power-station. Here it has already become common and obligatory practice to anticipate all possible failures of the system and to design in advance counter-measures and risk-barriers that limit the possible damage within tolerable bounds.

In complete analogy, political wisdom also demands that crises now must be prevented rather than reacted to. Today they gain great momentum and reach terrifying proportions in far less time than is needed for the design, operationalization and implementation of political, social and technological remedies. Measures prompted by a crisis at our doorstep will be effective only ten to twenty years from now, when the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the crisis will most likely appear in completely different form than at present. A region's present energy crisis might then have grown into catastrophic food shortages in quite different parts of the world, or into general economic deterioration and social upheavals.

Mankind cannot afford to wait for change to occur spontaneously and fortuitously. Rather, man must initiate, on his own, changes of necessary but tolerable magnitude in time to avert intolerably massive change that then would get completely out of control. In such case it would also be quite improbable to avoid the outbreak of World War III and with it the destruction, if not of all mankind, so at least of billions of people, their cultures and civilizations.

A social architecture

HOWARD V. PERLMUTTER

WE live in a dangerous decade where government alone cannot cope with the set of societal problematiques we see emerging everywhere in the world. We are engaged in a painful and treacherous transition to some new kind of global civilization whose outlines can only be dimly seen today.

Enterprise is more likely to be seen as a Satan, as a cause of disorder, but not as having a part in the solutions of societal problems. The nation State is overloaded with societal expectations. Yet there is no clear understanding about how the reforms of industrial society involve the enterprise.

In the growing *political disorder* we experience, in the multipolar nationalistic State system, where concern with national security is increasing, enterprise's role for politi-

tical leadership seems secondary, relegated often to the role of building conventional and nuclear weapons with greater capacity for devastation. World trade is not yet a major taming force in the international political system.

However, in the growing *economic disorder* we see the role of enterprise as primary. Governments cannot always make goods and services, even though they have influence on or control of enterprises. Enterprises are the bearers of, the appliers of science and technology in specific services, products and processes. The current stagnation of national economies, currency instability, and uncontrollable inflation obviously involve enterprises. These national economic problematiques also include rising external debts of most nations, and much greater difficulties in servicing those debts — if

restriction on exports grows — in the 1980s. Balance of payments deficits, and problems of national liquidity, depend to some degree on enterprises.

Enterprises are faced with largely unprecedented problems which include being internationally competitive, in *maturing or declining sectors* such as most consumer household durables, mass produced automobiles, simple electrical goods, bulk synthetics, bulk chemicals, standard machinery, steel, textiles and shipbuilding.

They are also faced with international survival in the *growth sectors* such as quality consumer goods, advanced electrical-electronic goods, computers and telecommunications, fine chemicals, specialty steels, capital goods based on design and service (especially robotics), biotechnology, services and tourism. Enterprises in more nations may seek market niches or aim to be the leading low cost world producers of a product.

This search may be like those strange animals, the lemmings, who collectively rush to their death. In most growth sectors, there may be over capacity, an excess of supply over demand, accompanied by growing tendencies towards national protectionism. More countries support their key industries of the past and future in unilaterally determined industrial policies.

The reluctance to invest, and the reluctance to consume, produce the expectation that we are in an extended period of economic decline. Simply reducing inventories, while waiting for the upward turn in consumer spending may be unduly optimistic.

The collision courses between enterprises from different nations seeking similar market niches are increasing. In such an environment, the likelihood that unemployment will increase is growing. Enterprise has a central role in the problem. Does it have a role also in the solutions?

The increase in unemployment is but one, although very important,

evidence of increasing *social disorder*. Egalitarian pressures, for the rights of all persons, men and women, minorities, the handicapped, and in deprived areas of countries for health, food, education, shelter are leading to more dissidence. These rising expectations are often beyond the capability of nations to meet.

Labour saving technologies may be the answer in the long term to problems of productivity but they do not in this decade meet the right to have a job, in both advanced and industrializing countries.

The industrial enterprise, even if there is a continuing trend toward post-industrialism (jobs in service industries), may need more than twenty years to create the jobs for all persons who want them. As enterprises cut back, focus on areas of strength, become more efficient, emphasize lower costs, and higher productivity, more durable, higher quality goods, worldwide market niches, with fewer people, we can expect social disorder to continue to grow in both the market and planned economies. What should be the enterprise roles in the production of jobs?

The role of enterprises is also central in *ecological disorder*, in the rising costs and unpredictable consequences of higher technology. The production of carcinogens from chemicals to fluorescent lights, constitute not only current health hazards but alteration in future biological functioning. Yet, future health effects are largely unknowable.

In addition, there are the increasing risks of more major unintended accidents and disasters, involving the air, water, and land. All involve enterprises as part of the problem. Yet, what roles shall enterprises play in the *pragmatiques* is not clear.

Any reform of industrial society must take into account these gloomy scenarios. Can wealth creating (usually, but not exclusively, private) enterprises adjust their missions, policies and structures to make a positive contribution to

human development in the next decades? Or does enterprise as it has evolved over millions of years have a fatal genetic flaw in face of this kind of growing societal turbulence? Can enterprise which is a leading part of the *problematiques* (political, economic, social and ecological) be also a leading part of the *pragmatiques*, the set of practical constructive interventions that reduces future societal disorder?

What human choices do we have?

To find what choices we have, we must penetrate into the current premises, values and beliefs that underly the social architecture of enterprise: the *mission or purposes*, the *systems of governance*, the *strategies*, the *organizational characters* and structures. To understand the *mental model* or *paradigm* underlying enterprise then is our first task. We shall then suggest three paradigms for enterprise (Perlmutter and Trist), and consider what roles each could have in society.

When we examine the ascent of enterprise in mining, manufacturing, services and agriculture, everywhere in the world, from the Northwest Global Quadrant (U.S. and Western Europe) and the Northeast Global Quadrant (USSR and Eastern Europe), the Southwest Global Quadrant (Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East) and the Southeast Global Quadrant (Japan, China, and the Southeastern Asian countries), we find that a similar paradigm or mental model for enterprise has emerged. There are real differences in performances between the state-owned firms of Eastern Europe and Western Europe, between private enterprise in the United States and Japan. But the similarities are sufficiently great to consider that there is a basic mental model which underlies the most successful versions of enterprise.¹

We call this model, the Industrial Paradigm A. Its primary values are: (a) the primacy of productivity, efficiency and hard work; (b) (for private enterprise) the belief in profit maximization or at least profit

1. A concept developed by Johann Galtung.

'satisficing', (c) the conviction that resources are unlimited, (d) that growth is necessary and continuous, (e) that the concern with environment is secondary, (f) that large is necessary and better, (g) that high technology is preferable even though it replaces people, (h) that materialistic needs of consumers can be created and met, (i) that competition nationally and internationally is better than cooperation, and necessary for survival, and that (j) the economic benefits of industrial growth will trickle down to the less fortunate in both the national and the international system.

This model may fit less well with the State-owned enterprises, where profitability has been absent. Yet, in the face of international competition even those highly subsidized labour intensive State-owned enterprises are now concerned with the costs of inefficiency, and the limited capability of nations to subsidize all the key sectors of the economy. For, unless some wealth is produced, it is difficult to share.

So, we can see the evolution of Paradigm A enterprise over time, from the farmer, the artisan, to the factory and the shareholding company, and with an increasingly internationally oriented vision of its markets, the transnational corporation or TNC.

Paradigm A, especially when it is employed in the social architecture of the private enterprise, has been remarkably successful. Indeed, from the Old Stone Age, to the New Stone Age, to the Bronze and Iron Ages, to the Middle Ages and then to Modern Times, Salk and Salk note that the great change of world population in the sixteenth century (numbering from the few millions to the more than four billion today) came as the means for control of infectious and nutritional deficiency diseases increased. Improvements in sanitation and nutrition in part are the consequences of enterprises which saw and met the needs of humans. Up until recently, the Paradigm A enterprise was perceived as having more benefits than costs.

In the last two decades, the awareness and the social costs of Para-

digm A enterprise have increased. And regulatory reforms were increased on every function of enterprise: from research and development, to production, marketing, industrial relations and finance.

Another paradigm for enterprise, another human choice has appeared as some of the basic premises of Paradigm A enterprise seemed to erode.

A set of anti-industrial critiques, contained in laws, protest movements and societal experiments are part of a reaction against the inequities and dangers posed by Paradigm A enterprise in the following.

(a) Environmental or greening movements, which point to the limits of growth, and the largely un-renewable resources of an earth.

(b) The need for devolution from bigness and centralization, in both the capitalistic and socialist systems.

(c) Groups favouring bottom up development, self-reliance, in both the national and international environments.

(d) Those groups who see Paradigm A enterprise as spiritually corrupting, and advocate a return to religious fundamentalism or ecumenical humanism.

We call this anti-industrial Mental Model, or Paradigm B. Paradigm B appears to have as its objective the dismantlement of the inhumane industrial society. The values held by these constituencies or societal stakeholders can be stated as:

(a) productivity and efficiency are secondary to concerns about people, (b) profit as immoral, (c) social development is more important than economic development, (d) both private and State owned enterprises, because they are large are exploitative, dehumanizing, and alienative of managers, workers, old and young, (e) that small is beautiful, (f) that technology creates more problems than it solves, (g) that the materialistic (oriented) enterprise is destructive to human values, particularly spiritual and the search for meaning in life, (h) that enterprise is increas-

ingly producing more social costs than benefits (as in the case of pollution) and, (i) the environment is non-renewable and must be preserved and, (j) cooperation is better and more necessary than predatory competition.

Paradigm B protagonists emphasize quality over quantity of life, austerity and frugality, simplicity and self-reliance, and an end to uncontrolled growth. This is essentially counter paradigm to Paradigm A.

Paradigm B has support in the international institutions such as the UN, WHO, the World Council of Churches, in non-governmental and governmental agencies, in national constituencies such as mass media, academics, local governments, consumer associations, women and environmental groups. Paradigm B is increasingly evidenced in legislation. And if both supply and demand side economics continue to experience difficulties, if both socialist, mixed and capitalistic economies prove more ungovernable, Paradigm B will gain even greater strength. For, underlying the anti-industrial Paradigm B, is the concern for the deeper needs of humans.

Paradigm B values and premises cannot easily be dismissed by the more ardent Paradigm A protagonists for enterprise. There is evidence that: (a) these values have become more pervasive despite initial resistances and defensiveness by enterprise and government leadership, and (b) a climate of mistrust of large enterprises persists to this day and is growing, (c) enterprise fails to possess a coherent credible ideology that matches Paradigm B on all its points of contention.

Paradigm B supporters advocate a return to small societies, to the village, to the neighbourhood, to a greater emphasis on smaller entrepreneurial enterprises, to cooperatives in every sphere of economic activity, labour intensive technologies, a greater concern with the natural (natural foods, nature, the protection of wildlife in all its forms, self-reliance, and holistic health care).

In the international system, Paradigm B policies support self-sufficient nations withdrawing from dependency on other nations, the reduction of foreign influence, and economic protectionism, in short, economic autarky. Paradigm B protagonists advocate the phasing out of foreign TNCs, whose social costs and exploitiveness, and whose socio-cultural impacts are considered corrupting of traditional values.

China and Sri Lanka could be seen as former social experiments with Paradigm B. Paradigm B enterprise is a human choice: to build an economy based on the small, lower technology and renewable resources, a return to self sufficient agriculture, and away from the attempts in developing countries to imitate different industrial models, western and eastern in origin.

The limitations of Paradigm B, where it is applied, are essentially: (a) the wish to return to a former arcadia for a whole nation seems utopian in a planet where the borders cannot be closed, (b) the unavoidable necessity for higher technology even in the maintenance of health or the production of foods, factory jobs, etc., (c) the difficulty of retreating to a world of isolated nation States and, (d) in a world of increasingly aggressive nation States, armed with sophisticated weapons, a State with Paradigm B low technology enterprises is very vulnerable.

Finally, Paradigm B represents a denial of irreversible human, international interdependences on a small planet, with the capabilities of instantaneous communication from any point to any other point.

Our interpretation of our current societal problematics, internationally and nationally is that it is essentially a contest between these two paradigms. The lesser risk is long-term economic and social stalemates and little progress. The greater risks are Amageddons: a nuclear holocaust, a global depression, global famine and major ecological disasters.

The most likely risks are some paralyzing polarizations between

different groups in the same society as well as between nations.

We see a third human choice which we call Paradigm C enterprise, based not on Paradigm A win-lose relationship between enterprises and societies, or on Paradigm B retreatist principles, but on the concept of a symbiotic enterprise. The term symbiosis in biology connotes reciprocal relations between organisms which live in close proximity of similar and different species. The relationships are mutually advantageous and essential to survival.

The Paradigm C enterprise can take a more constructive role in society in new kinds of symbiosis with the various societal groups. Both viability and legitimacy become criteria for measuring the effectiveness of an enterprise.

The new premises, values and beliefs underlying the social architecture of Paradigm C enterprise are based on recent research on models for organizations in turbulent environments in the physical, biological, social sciences and by Perlmutter and Trist on social architecture. The essential values of Paradigm C are: (a) efficiency and international competitiveness can be made *consistent with* concern for *people* as individuals; (b) an orientation to *viability* (wealth creation, profitability) can be *balanced with* an orientation towards *legitimacy* (taking on needed *social roles*); (c) that *small and large enterprises* can be balanced and have distinctive capabilities and that small enterprises can function in the context of the large; (d) that the concern with *environment* and *non-renewable resources* can be balanced with selective growth and the discovery of renewable resources; (e) that a wide range of technologies can be created and used as a function and end-use conditions and consequences; (f) that *multitiered participation and entrepreneurial innovation* at the periphery of society can balance and can attenuate centristic and bureaucratic trends; (g) that *self-reliance* at the individual, community and national levels can be balanced with partnerships based on *parity, not paternalism*; (h) that *quantity of life* and *quality of life* can be balanced for a still growing

world population; (i) that *rights and opportunities* can be connected with *responsibilities*, and that (j) major human resources can be shared to reduce national and international disorder through *coalitions in pragmatic efforts* rather than *ideological confrontation*.

In short, the Paradigm C enterprise seeks a new set of balances between autonomy and interdependence, cooperation (win-win) and competition.

The validation of the third human choice for the reform of the industrial society requires a set of symbiotic processes between a great variety of institutions within and between countries. Leadership of government, enterprise and other groups must create conditions for co-learning and trust, which must be sustained through all the difficult stages of learning to work together. A new kind of societal entrepreneur is needed.

Consider this list of projects which could involve Paradigm C enterprises with a variety of partners.

1. To prepare youth for jobs with a future by providing apprenticeship for young persons in a city who wish to work, in existing enterprises, large and small, cooperative, and transnational corporations.
2. To develop a set of cooperative relationships between enterprises, government, educational institutions and communities so that:
 - (a) all persons in a country can have excess primary health care, and all children have access to clean water, immunization, and adequate nutrition;
 - (b) drugs which are now considered 'orphan' because they are not sufficiently profitable are developed, e.g., for tropical diseases;
 3. To develop a massive cooperative effort between enterprises for reducing the impacts of pollution in any given setting.
 4. To develop the capabilities of TNCs to work with existing enterprises in both home and host countries to increase employment in both home and host countries.

5. To help countries develop the balance between industrial development and greater self-reliance in agriculture, through a network of cooperative relationships between large enterprises, communities and cooperatives.

Many such projects are underway, but they are usually peripheral activities of enterprise.

The major identification of enterprise today is with Paradigm A. But the doubts about its viability and legitimacy in the future are growing. *The internal struggle* within these enterprises is between the driving and restraining forces towards incorporating the premises of Paradigm C into the key decisions of the enterprise.

The *external constraints* are: the apparently conflicting demands of the different external constituencies of the enterprise, and the perception that the demands of the stake-holders are excessive, the climate of mistrust between enterprise and institutions, the fears of international competition, the current stagflationary economy, and perceived costs of any social innovation. *The internal constraints* in enterprise are the beliefs that rewards come from wealth creation not social contribution, cynicism regarding the need for a concern for the legitimacy of enterprise, the belief that hostility towards enterprise (large, especially) is inevitable, and a genuine unclarity about what roles enterprise must play in society.

But the driving forces are growing. There have been (1) major mistakes due to the underestimation of the forces of Paradigm B constituencies (e.g., pollution laws, etc.) and (2) increased motivations of managers who want to work in a company which is both societally progressive and creates wealth.

As the opportunities for behaving in the Paradigm C mode begin to outweigh the threats, Paradigm C may become more widely accepted. This will depend on having successful experiences in building symbiotic partnerships; enterprises, communities and other groups which are mutually beneficial, based on

openness, trust and mutual respect.

The symbiotic partnership experience involves the finding and implementing of shared objectives among dissimilar institutions (e.g., enterprise and education), in which each of the partners, as equals, builds on its own strengths and reduces each other's limitation, pooling capabilities to take on tasks which none of the partners could undertake alone.

We do have choices as we approach the end of the twentieth century. We believe these choices require an awareness of three distinctive mental models for enterprise we discussed. There is a major choice between a reform process which is based on an anti-industrial Paradigm B or a symbiotic societal enterprise paradigm. The likelihood that enterprise could continue to the twenty-first century based on Paradigm A is less.

If we are to avoid a nuclear Amageddon, we will need new forms of political, economic and social partnerships between contending nations, near and far. To the degree any nation possesses a portfolio of symbiotically oriented enterprises and projects with its hostile neighbours, its chances for national security could increase.

This is not to say that economic arrangements between symbiotically oriented enterprises in the international system are sufficient. But the reform of industrial society includes building a global order where peoples of the nation can live and work in peace on a small planet. A Paradigm C enterprise can be one of the pillars of a plausible world order in which a new global, pluralistic civilization is bound together by symbiotic bonds, not those of dominance and dependency.

To paraphrase the biologist, Lewis Thomas, 'Survival of the fittest doesn't mean that nature is red in tooth and claw, as the 19th century read the message of evolution, or that only the strongest, most dominating, and shrewdest will win. The fittest who survive are those who cooperate best with other living things.'

Population growth

CLAUDIO STERN

IN most of the less developed regions of the world, the twentieth century has witnessed rates of population growth without precedent in the history of mankind. Although there are clear signs of diminishing fertility in various of these regions, it is expected that their population will keep growing at accelerated rates at least for the next generation.

This population growth has taken place simultaneously with a significant process of migration from rural to urban areas which has resulted in the very fast growth of the largest cities in some of the nations comprising this under-privileged part of the world without, however, having significantly alleviated the poor living conditions either of those who remain in the countryside or of those seeking a better life in the cities.

Outmigration, on the one hand, has been insufficient to ameliorate the pressure of the rural population on land and other resources, since it has not offset the high rates of growth of the rural population, and has usually been translated (at least in the short range and due to the positive selectivity of migrants) in leaving behind weaker rural structures with diminished potentialities for enabling a sustained process of endogenous economic growth.

On the other hand, the incorporation of millions of these migrants into the largest cities has made it more difficult for large proportions of urbanites to obtain suitable employment and to advance along their road of reaching the living stand-

ards usually associated with urban life in the developing world.

What has been done about these problems in the past? What have been the results of the policies implemented? What are the prospects about this situation in the near future? Is there anything else that can be done to change some of the conditions described or at least to ameliorate some of their more negative consequences? These are some of the questions that we will be addressing in this brief presentation.

In order to avoid mis-interpretations, it is important to clarify from the outset that there will be no opportunity to go into some of the differences in the processes to be described, between various regions of the Third World. Suffice it to say that I am aware of some of these differences but that I don't think any of them is large or important enough to violate the main thrust of the argument to be presented.

The population of the less developed countries (LDCs) of the world is today around 3.4 billion and will probably reach 5 billion by the end of the century.

The relatively fast process of urbanization of the population living in these countries will continue, although the majority of this population will still probably live in rural areas by the turn of the century..

Rates of growth of the urban population will remain relatively high (around 4 per cent annually for the rest of the century), which will bring the *urban population of the LDCs* to more than double its

present size (from 1 to more than 2 billion). Rates of growth of the rural population will probably diminish but will continue to be positive beyond the turn of the century, contrasting with what has occurred in some industrialized countries since the 19th century and in most of them since before the Second World War. As a result, *the rural population of the LDCs will grow from its present size of 2.2 billion to around 2.9 billion.*

What will probably be one of the more remarkable phenomena during the next decades will be the *increasing concentration of the urban population of the LDCs in huge megalopolis*. If, as mentioned, the urban population of the LDCs will double over the next 17 years, those living in cities with more than one million inhabitants will almost treble, and those living in cities with more than five million will be close to four times greater than today. Approximately, one billion people in the LDCs will live in millionaire cities and close to half of them in huge agglomerations of more than five million.

If large metropolitan areas characterized the industrialized nations of the world during the greater part of the 20th century, these huge megalopolis' will increasingly be seen as characteristic of poor and backward countries in the future. By way of illustration: by 1950 more than half of the 30 largest cities in the world belonged to industrialized nations, whereas more than two thirds of them will belong to the LDCs twenty years from now. And the size many of them will probably reach is astonishing, to say the least: Mexico City will probably reach 30 million inhabitants, São Paulo 26, Shanghai 23, Beijing 20, Rio de Janeiro 19, Bombay, Calcutta and Jakarta around 17 million each, etc.

To sum up: both the rural and the urban population of the poor nations of the world will keep growing beyond the turn of the century; the former will remain highly dispersed in most of these countries, while the latter will become increasingly concentrated in larger and larger cities.

Now, this latter process of urbanization and concentration of the population will be partly the result of a significant process of migration of people from rural to urban areas and from smaller to larger cities, a process that will involve several hundred million youngsters and young adults who will seek employment and better living conditions in the cities.

Why will these people move? Why can't they get a job or acceptable living conditions in the places they live in? Why did their parents and grandparents stay at their places of origin and not they?

The reasons are various and complex, but we have to get at least an idea of some of them if we then want to talk seriously about policies and measures for solving some of these questions. This is because in order for policies to be successful, they have to get at the factors that are behind appearances and which are really determining the processes the results of which we see and measure.

Rural-urban migrations are only a sign, a symptom, and a result of a very profound and disruptive process of social change which most, if not all, so-called less developed countries have been going through: some of them, as many in Latin America, for more than a century, and others, as some in Africa, for only a few decades.

We must not forget that most of these countries were at one time colonies of today's industrialized nations. This process that we are talking about involves the *increasing incorporation of heretofore predominantly peasant societies into a worldwide industrial and monetary system which more often than not ends up by disrupting the traditional economic and social structure* and makes it evermore necessary for everybody, including even the more isolated peasants, to depend on wage income in order to be able to acquire not only the goods necessary for consumption, but also those needed for their own production of goods. This is a kind of production and consumption significantly different from what it used to be and which

depends more and more on economic forces totally beyond the control not only of the local communities of these societies, but even of their central governments.

Let us see what this means in more concrete terms. Fifty years ago, so to say, peasant communities (and I am speaking of this process in terms which I think are applicable also to other types of societies, including nomadic ones), *used to produce most of what they needed*. Granted that these needs might have been quite modest, but the important fact is that *the production of the necessary goods for satisfying the basic needs of these communities involved the work of most members of all families*. Boys, girls, the young, the old, all had something to do which helped in the process of producing the goods and services needed: food, clothing, utensils for cooking and eating, as well as for ploughing the land or hunting and gathering; raising the children, caring for the elderly. Some products, surely, were exchanged with other communities, but only some families were usually involved in trade or barter and most of the time this did not involve extensive periods of absence from the local community.

In sum, these communities or local societies were, on the one hand, predominantly self-sufficient and, on the other, they were characterized by what in a sense we could call 'full employment'. Work and consumption had a different meaning at that time. People did not need money, or wage labour in order to earn it. They had a place, and a useful one, in their local society. *They had a structure which gave meaning to what everybody did and which allowed a certain physical and psychological well-being for most members of these societies.*

Another important characteristic of most of these communities was that they had high fertility and high mortality rates. Families had many children, perhaps ten or twelve, but many of them, maybe half, also died, mostly in their first years of life. Matching a certain social and economic equilibrium as described above there was also a demographic one. As a result, rates of popula-

tion growth were low fifty years ago in most of these societies. But the rapid introduction of medical technology and of scientific medicine, which were imported more or less simultaneously with industrial products and industrial technology, allowed many of those who would have died, to survive, and most of those who survived, to live longer and longer. And both their greater survival and their greater longevity meant larger and larger populations.

So, together with the introduction of industrial society and of a monetary economy, which at an increasing pace disrupted traditional agrarian societies, we have this additional factor of a greater population growth, which also helped to disrupt the previously-existing order. Both of these factors have worked in the direction of pushing *greater and greater numbers of the young in rural communities to become obsolete in terms of the needs of the local structure* and to be forced to look for salaried work in order to allow not only for their own survival but also for that of their now more numerous families.

If conditions in the rural areas of the LDCs were perhaps never very good in terms of contemporary western standards, the forces at work which we mentioned above have generally worked against their betterment. The increasing growth of the rural populations has often implied greater population densities and a greater pressure on local resources. Outmigration of the young and able, on the other hand, have meant that it is mostly the weaker who stay behind, making it ever more difficult to enhance local development.

We can thus see that, unless new ways of equilibrating peasant and rural social structures are found, there are *very strong forces pushing for the outmigration of increasing numbers of people* from these conditions. We will see below what possibilities there are for obtaining this. For the time being, let us turn to the other pole of the problem we are dealing with: if so many have to leave their local societies, where is it that they can find salaried work, or at least the minimum conditions

for survival, without being a burden for their families?

For a time it was thought, and many still think, that the solution for the above mentioned problems lay in the development of industry in the LDCs. Does not the development of industry need precisely the availability of so-called free labour which can be hired for pay? Would not its development allow for the incorporation of all those expelled from traditional activities and from rural areas, as it supposedly occurred during the process of development of today's industrial societies?

Theoretically perhaps yes, except that the nations concerned and the world at large are presently under far different conditions from those prevailing at the time when today's industrial societies developed.

We cannot here go into any detail about the factors that work against the possibility of most present-day so-called underdeveloped nations to become industrial societies in the classical sense of the term, and even less so to solve through that means the problems related to the 'oversupply of labour' which characterize them. Suffice it to mention some of them: the complexity, expensiveness and difficult accessibility of the necessary technology; the labour saving character of most of this technology; the extremely competitive nature of existing consumption markets and thus the difficulties for exporting manufactured goods; the amount of resources needed to cope with the basic needs of rapidly growing populations, as well as the need to invest increasing resources in endeavours that are not directly productive (arms, superfluous consumption of local burgeoisies, interest rates on loans, etc.). For most LDCs, even those now often included in the category of 'intermediate powers', these and other factors make it extremely difficult if not impossible to become fully industrialized welfare societies.

What happens as a result is that most large cities in the LDCs are unable to provide enough employment in the modern sectors of the economy for the population seeking entry into it, a process which,

instead of solving the problems of rural poverty and unemployment, merely reproduce them in the cities themselves.

It is probably generally true that it has been the largest cities of most LDCs which have received the greatest amount of resources for development in each of the countries concerned over the last decades, especially during the period when so-called import substitution was the main strategy for the development of these nations (1940-1970).

However, given the pressures for outmigration from the rural areas (and, we might add, from many urban areas not favoured by the industrializing strategy), whatever quantity of effective labour is demanded, it is immediately surpassed by the existing and the incoming labour supply.

In spite of this, the largest cities where whatever wealth resulting from economic growth (including that produced in the countryside) was accumulated, became and continue to be magnets for attracting migrants. The great amount of poverty and of unemployment existing in them and which are well known to most of you need not be further illustrated here.

Why, we might then ask ourselves, given this situation, do people still drift to the large cities of these countries? Because some actually find the 'work' they were seeking while most of the remaining find at least a way of avoiding death through famine or illness, which is the fate that would await many of them if they had remained in the countryside. Moreover, even those whose survival in the cities is doubtful, move because they hope to find there greater possibilities for their children than if they remained behind.

If this is the situation typically prevailing in many LDCs, what has been done in order to counteract the trends mentioned above and to confront their consequences?

Various policies have been implemented with the intention of reducing the rural exodus: agrarian ref-

orms; colonization programmes and resettling schemes; wage, tax and price policies; the implementation of 'integrated rural development programmes'. Others have been directed to the reorientation of migrants away from the largest cities: the strengthening of so-called intermediate cities; the creation of 'new' and of satellite cities as well as of new 'growth poles'. Other measures have been taken in some countries to try to stop or drastically diminish the growth of the largest cities, mostly by administrative fiat, residence and working permits being the most popular.

Most of these measures and policies, whatever their success might have been in reaching other objectives, have unfortunately proved to be rather unsuccessful in curbing rural to urban migration or in significantly reducing the rate of urbanization or the growth of large cities. Let us see why.

Though a few agrarian reforms have actually led to the redistribution of land to the peasants, and in a few cases have even stimulated significant numbers of them to remain in the countryside, temporarily retarding or diminishing the rate of urbanization, in the longer run they have been unable by themselves to counteract the trends we described above.

The reasons are various: land reforms have often served to replace quasi-feudal relations of production in agriculture for capitalist ones, a process which has accelerated the development of commercial agriculture, of mechanization, and of the prevalence of wage labour. This has usually been conducive to the substitution of permanent by temporary employment and thus, in the longer run, has stimulated outmigration from the rural areas.

In other cases, the redistribution of latifundia has ended up, less than two generations after the land reforms took place, in the creation of minifundia, which have usually resulted in a reduction of production and in further outmigration from the countryside.

Paradoxically, land reforms have in most cases directly stimulated

urban growth through various mechanisms, most notably the transference of investments and of the economic surplus produced to urban areas, and by providing urban populations with more food at lower costs (often subsidized by governments). Since most of this urban economic growth is obtained at the expense of agriculture, it has increased rural-urban differentials and thus further encouraged rural-urban migration.

Since agrarian reforms greatly affect the economic and political interests of the powerful rural landlords, they are not easy to implement. The alternatives in many LDCs with land potentially available for cultivation have been the colonization programmes or resettlement schemes, the basic objectives of which often are to absorb part of the surplus population of depressed areas and, thus, to decrease rural-urban migration.

Unfortunately, mounting evidence shows that these programmes more often than not absorb only a small proportion of their target populations, and usually at exorbitant financial costs. Moreover, contrary to expectations, even when they have had some success in alleviating population pressure in depressed areas, this has not necessarily led to a decrease in outmigration from them since, given the social class structure of most of these areas, any surplus over traditional subsistence requirements is likely to be absorbed by the landlords and middlemen, thus leaving these communities as poor as ever.

The colonized areas themselves, though usually planned to favour the development of independent small farmers, end up by reproducing the schemes of domination existing in other areas, and this when they don't serve the sole purpose of clearing new land for existing landlords or owners of large agricultural enterprises. After a usually brief period of population absorption, most colonized areas themselves start expelling it. On another hand, these programmes, as we saw was the case with agrarian reforms, also serve to strengthen the urban eco-

nomy, where most of the new wealth generated is invested.

Since wage differentials between rural and urban areas are thought to be one of the main determinants of rural-urban migration, wage policies are often implemented with the objective of curbing them. These policies usually begin by defining legal minimum salaries for rural workers. Given the commonly weak bargaining power of these workers, however, the measures are difficult to enforce. In any case, contrary to what would be expected, they tend in the long run to exacerbate outmigration, since a more intense penetration of salaried relations takes place, which tends to stimulate producers to substitute men by machines, and which ends up by displacing rural workers or, in the best of cases, by replacing permanent by temporal workers and thus intensifying pressures for emigration.

A policy highly favoured by many L.D.C. governments as well as by various international organizations has been that of 'integrated rural development programmes.' These usually involve a coordinated effort by various government agencies to bring about an overall betterment of living conditions in rural communities, and include the training of the local population in various skills, as well as provisions for increasing the existing infrastructure and of social services such as health and education.

In practical terms, most of these programmes have proved too costly to be able to cover a significant proportion of rural communities over a sufficiently long period of time, which would probably be the necessary conditions for them to have an effect in curbing emigration. Moreover, as almost any other modernizing scheme when applied within an otherwise traditional social structure, these programmes often serve as an incentive for the most able to leave their communities and look for better horizons.

Turning now to some of the policies that have been applied in order to deviate migrations directed to the largest cities, it can be said that, although also very costly and

plagued by all kinds of administrative and political problems, they have perhaps been more successful in reaching their objective. The development of new 'growth poles' and new cities has in various known cases opened up alternative destinations for migrants who would have otherwise moved to the primate cities.

On the other hand, these programmes have usually stimulated rural-urban migration *within* the corresponding region where they have been developed, thus creating the same kinds of urban problems to which we referred above. They do however tend to reduce the concentration of population in specific regions and urban centers, if and up to the point to which they reach a level of sustained growth over a significant time-period.

Last in this quick survey come the direct controls on urbanization, which include from restrictions to settling in large cities to slum clearance programmes designed in part to discourage migration. Many migrants have been sent back to their communities of origin through these schemes. Some of these programmes have had a certain amount of success in controlling urbanization or the growth of large cities for some time, but with a cost in terms of human suffering difficult to justify, especially when they are not accompanied by strong measures to increase the availability of housing, of jobs, and of other necessities of life elsewhere.

We must not forget to mention the fact that there are other more general population policies which also include as part of their objective to affect the processes we are discussing, most notably, population programmes designed to diminish the rate of growth of the overall population and which have been implemented in one or another form and to a greater or lesser extent in many LDCs over the last decades.

There is now little doubt that many of them are effectively contributing to decrease the rates of growth of the population and that, in the longer-run, lesser rates of

growth of both urban and rural populations might contribute to alleviate some of the problems we have been discussing. Many, though, have not been very successful in penetrating the rural populations and, in any case, as we mentioned at the beginning, the 'demographic inertia' (as called by demographers) of the population already living, will make for high rates of growth in most LDCs for at least the next generation.

The picture drawn leads inevitably to the conclusion that most policies applied in the LDCs in order to control the processes we have been discussing have not been very effective in reaching their objectives. Why is this so?

Mainly for two interrelated reasons: because they are usually applied as isolated measures and not as part of a general development scheme of which they would constitute organic elements, and because they run counter to the dominant economic forces determined precisely by the general development scheme being followed.

To give some examples: many third world nations still have as their model, either by choice or by necessity, that of industrial nations. Now, the development of industrialism in agrarian societies involves the transfer of labour from agricultural and other rural activities to manufacturing, commercial and service activities mostly located in cities. It therefore *implies* the geographical mobility of the population from mostly dispersed villages to urban areas.

The very underdevelopment of these nations, on the other hand, leaves little choice but to concentrate the scarce capital available in them in a few areas, with migration accordingly flowing from most rural communities, which increasingly become subject to the disequilibrating processes illustrated above, towards a few urban centers.

If these processes are implied by the development strategy being followed, it is quite obvious that any policies designed to counteract them are doomed to failure. Viewed from

a different angle, many of the policies adopted by the LDCs and described above would probably succeed in counteracting these trends if applied together and as part of a development scheme; the principles of which were congruent with such measures.

One of the cases where this has been attempted (and which I give as example for the simple reason that it is the one I know best) is that of Cuba, where most of the policies mentioned above have been applied at one time or another over the last twenty years with a relatively high degree of success which includes, amongst other results, those of having significantly slowed down the growth of Havana in favour of various middle-sized cities, of having effectively colonized Isla de Pinos and favourably changed most other pre-existing migration currents, of having developed an extensive network of small urban villages in the rural areas which have allowed for the concentration of the dispersed rural population, thus making it possible for them to receive all kinds of social services.

Perhaps, more important than all this by itself is the fact that these gains have made it possible not only to achieve an acceptable balance between rural and urban development, but to go a long way towards the elimination of poverty in both rural and urban areas. All this, of course, has taken place within a redefinition of this nation's development strategy.

My own conclusion is therefore that most LDCs would need to make quite drastic changes in their development strategies to counteract existing trends towards increasing rural poverty and excessive urban concentration.

- Industrial nations could be of great help if they would interfere less with decisions made by the LDCs in terms of defining their own paths to development and if they would contribute more wholeheartedly to the existing efforts to redefine the world economic order in a more rational way, for the good of the coming generations in both the LDCs and the MDCs.

Conservation for survival

MOHAMED KASSAS

BARBARA Ward and Rene Dubos¹ brought to our attention the concept of our *only one earth* that they presented to the world as a whole and particularly to the United Nations Conference on Human

Environment, better known as the Stockholm Conference, in 1972. This concept was dramatically perceived by astronauts who could see that it was actually *one earth*, in their jargon: *one space ship*.

But scientists world-wide were involved in a series of international

programmes of research on the global phenomena; these included the International Geophysical Year (IGY) 1957-58, the International Biological Programme (IBP) 1964-1974, the Upper Mantle Project 1964-1970, the Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP) 1970-1980, the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme initiated in 1971, etc.. These international ventures mobilised the resources of the United Nations system and other inter-governmental bodies and of the non-governmental bodies of the world scientific community under the leadership of the International Council for Scientific Unions (ICSU) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and other international institutions. All this collaborative scientific endeavour produced a considerable volume of information on the physical and biological processes which operate within the *only one earth*, and mechanics and dynamics of global systems.

It became evident that, within the space of our small planet, life of various form and kind abounded within the surface skin of the solid earth (lithosphere), the surface layers of the water bodies (hydrosphere) and the lower layers of the gaseous envelope (atmosphere). These three components form a sphere within which life exists: the biosphere.

Major advances during recent years resulted from an international programme of research on major bio-geo-chemical cycles of carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur and other elements (under leadership of the ICSU Scientific Committee on Problems of Environment-SCOPE and the United Nations Environment Programme-UNEP). It is clear that the flux of elements between the three components of the biosphere is a continuum. Global climatic studies show the interlinkages between ocean and atmosphere in determining climatic patterns, and the important roles of the bodies of ice, the forest cover and the deserts in atmospheric processes. The three components of the biosphere are interdependent and their segregation into media (atmosphere, lithosphere and hydrosphere) is only a

matter of convenience of presentation.

Within the biosphere operate a number of processes that are global, that is, processes in which the whole of the biosphere behaves as one system: climate, hydrological cycle, global energy budget, global biogeo-chemical cycles, etc. These processes have local manifestations, but their global dimensions and tele-connections are evident. Global ecology is the science that comprehends these processes and their interactions.

Living organisms, including man, find their requirements of space and materials within the biosphere and are influenced by its conditions and forces, and their impacts on it. Global environmental science addresses these interactions and responses between man and global ecological processes. Let us consider some elements of these interactions and trends in the complex environmental relationships of our *only one earth*.

Meteorological records are extensive and satellite imagery has provided new information about patterns of atmospheric circulation. Advancements in scientific methodologies of modelling global processes added new insights of the inter-relatedness of atmosphere, ocean (including ice bodies) and land. But time-series measurements are still limited and available data allow us only to note certain trends in a few atmospheric components.

1. Carbon dioxide concentration continues to increase at a rate of about 1 part per million (ppm) per year: c. 315 ppm in 1957 and c. 340 ppm in 1981. The principal reason for this increase is the emissions of carbon dioxide by combustion of fossil fuels (global annual release of CO₂: in 1940s c 5000 million tonnes, in 1970s c 1800 million tonnes (Rotty and Weinberg, 1977).² Clearance of forests is another cause for carbon dioxide increase. But most of the carbon dioxide emitted does not add to the atmospheric CO₂, and

oceans were perceived as the major sink. Other sinks may become clear (see Bolin, Degens, Kempe and Ketner, 1979: *The Global Carbon Cycle*, SCOPE 13, J. Wiley).

Increase of atmospheric carbon dioxide has a greenhouse (warming) effect and there is agreement that this trend could lead to an increase in air and sea-surface temperatures and, hence, increase of evaporation and changes in rainfall patterns. But such temperature increases would vary with altitude (higher at earth and water surfaces and much less noticeable at 3 km altitude) and latitude (higher at higher latitudes and much less noticeable at the equator). Any impact of CO₂ global increase on climate will vary in different regions. These issues are the subject matter of the ongoing *World Climate Programme*.

But, the increase in global atmospheric carbon dioxide may enhance photosynthesis and hence increase primary productivity of plants — *wild and cultivated*. This fertilizer effect has been demonstrated at small scale experimental studies, but its significance at field level is yet to be shown.

2. Human activities add to the particulate matter suspended in the atmosphere. It is estimated (Berlyand, 1975) that natural sources emit some 1320 million tonnes per year of particulate matter (mostly: marine salt, soil erosion, forest fires and volcanic eruptions), and man-made sources emit some 300 million tonnes per year (mostly: fuel combustion, industrial emissions, land ploughing). The physical impact of these particulates (dust and aerosols) pertains to their greenhouse effect (warming) if suspended in lower layers of the atmosphere and their cooling effect if emitted to upper layers. Atmospheric turbidity measurements included in the WMO-UNEP BAPMON network programme will provide for analysis of trends and their likely impact on climate.

3. Sulphur oxides enter the atmosphere through burning fossil fuel (sulphur content varies from

0.05% in natural gas to 8% in certain grades of coal), and from metal smelting (sulphur content of pyrite ores can reach 45%). Man-made emissions of sulphur dioxide increase at about 5% per year reaching some 196 million tonnes annually by the end of 1970s. Nitrogen oxides resulting from burning fossil fuels and industrial emissions are also increasing in the atmosphere. Acid precipitation, caused by sulphuric and nitric acids that result from the sulphur and nitrogen oxides collecting in the atmosphere, has become a matter of serious concern in northwestern Europe and northeastern North America. Acid precipitation caused the impoverishment of freshwater lakes, especially in lakes over igneous rocks; this was evident and widespread in Scandinavia and in eastern Canada. It also caused ecological damage to vegetation and soil. The issue of acid rain presents a clear example of regional responsibilities of environmental pollution.

4. Depletion of the stratospheric ozone as a result of photochemical interactions with emissions of exhaust gases from high-flying supersonic aircraft or of chlorofluorocarbons used as refrigerants and aerosol propellants was a matter of worldwide concern during the 1970s. While in theory such depletion could be caused by a variety of chemicals and it would increase the penetration of biologically damaging ultraviolet radiation, no reliable evidence of such depletion is available.

5. Many of the toxic substances that are emitted into the atmosphere are long-lived (heavy metals and pesticides) and hence accumulate in living organisms in sequence of time or build-up through food chains. We do not have systematic monitoring for these substances except in limited locations and general trends cannot be identified. But incidental measurements (lead in Greenland and Antarctic ice, metal pollution in sediments of the Palace Moat in Tokyo—Goldberg et al., 1976; DDT in marine mammals in the Atlantic, etc.) show that these substances could be a serious environmental hazard and that the atmosphere is a

principal pathway of their long-range transport.

The atmosphere is one of the three principal physical (abiotic) components of the biosphere, the hydrosphere (oceans, seas, inland waters) and the lithosphere (sedimentary and basement geological formations, surface crusts, soils) are the other two. These are also controlled by natural phenomena that are beyond the manipulations of man; and are media that may receive refuse and effluents of human activities (pollution).

Within the space provided by the abiotic components of the biosphere live the elements of the organic world: the biota. The life processes of these organisms are directly influenced by the materials, forces and conditions prevalent in the abiotic biosphere; these relationships are the subject matter of ecology. The biotic and abiotic components are so closely knit that they comprise integral systems: ecosystems. The processes that integrate the abiotic components of an ecosystem with its variety of biotic components (plants, animals, micro-organisms) are those of production, consumption and decomposition: processes of material cycling and energy flow.

We can go on describing the processes of the biosphere and the changes that are gradually occurring in its various components: pollution of waters of oceans, seas, rivers and lakes; destruction of forests and woodlands especially in the tropics; ecological imbalances resulting from excessive and widespread use of chemicals; degradation of extensive areas of pasturelands especially in the semi-arid regions of the world. These changes are documented in: *The World Environment* (a report by UNEP, 1982, ed. M. Holdgate, M. Kassas & G. White, Tycooly Int. Pub.).

But, the question we may need to pose for ourselves is: what is the essential meaning of all this, and how are these complex and varied events related? The answer may comprise the following elements:

1. the advent of man, and his eventual prominence, created new

dimensions in the operation of the biosphere; as man distinguished himself amongst the biotic components of the biosphere as *special*, his role and impact gradually reached up to levels of natural phenomena (causing extinction of thousands of species of plants and animals, changing natural vegetation in vast expanses of land, modifying the global hydrological cycle through world-wide river controls, etc);

2. for every environmental problem there are local sources of origin with widespread global manifestation;

3. the biosphere—at local and global levels—has certain capacities (of self cleansing, of production, of resilience) beyond which damage or degradation may be irreparable;

4. the man-biosphere interactions can best be conceived as interrelationships among three systems: biosphere, technosphere and sociosphere; environmental problems arise from failures in these three-pronged relationships.

The *biosphere* is the nature system including the atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and the living biota. This system has a history that dates back far beyond the history of man, its operations follow global and universal phenomena that are far beyond the control of man (at the macro scale), it provides man with the space where he lives and the elements that he develops into resources for his needs.

The *technosphere* is the man-made system of structures that man sets within the space of the biosphere: settlements of villages and cities, industrial centres, transport and communication structures, irrigation-drainage and river control systems, farmlands, etc. This man-made system is under control of man in the present. Certain components (e.g., farming systems) are managed by man but not under his full control; they are still under the influence of biosphere processes of climate, hydrology, etc.

The *sociosphere* is the man-made system of non-structures that man has developed and adopts in manag-

ing the societal internal relationships and relationship with the other two systems. This man-made system evolved through centuries of human history and comprises components that date to the past (religion, national constitution and legislations, cultural heritage, etc.). It is the sum of the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural institutions that prevail in a community.

The complexity of the multi-dimensional interactions among the three systems will be appreciated if we remember:

- their different origins and control,
- their differences in scales of time and space. This will naturally result in discrepancies.

Two concepts become apparent.

1. Resources result from interactions among the three systems: societal action on elements of the biosphere using the machinery of the technosphere. Elements of the biosphere remain as geological formations, hydrological processes, biological organs, etc., till: (a) man discovers their utility in meeting needs and requirements, (b) man develops means of obtaining (and treating if necessary) these elements, and (c) man acts to transform the elements into resources. This explains Zimmerman's (1951)⁵ statement 'resources are not, they become', and the nature conservation movement is striving to persuade us that elements of nature (species of plants and animals) that are not used today may prove most valuable tomorrow.

It also means that development is the action of man on biosphere elements, and that a *developed society* is a society that has the indigenous capability for the management of the complex inter-relationships among the three systems, and that an *under-developed society* is short of this capability. It has been suggested (Batisse, 1973⁶) that there is a fourth system, *noosphere*, the body of knowledge and ideas that

5. *World Resources and Industries*, Harper, New York.

6. *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, February 1973.

is applied in managing the man-biosphere relations.

2. Environmental problems result from failure of, or discrepancies in, the interactions among the three systems, which — in the final analysis — relate to some shortcoming in the system by which a society manages the operation of these interactions. Examples may illustrate this concept: let me quote three.

The lithosphere (terrestrial component of the biosphere) provides man with the space of land. Man uses this land in two principal ways: building (settlements, industries, roads and other transport structures) and farming (agriculture, pasture, sylviculture). Farming is the main food-producing system, it also provides a variety of other products; and it requires certain attributes of land that are not available all over the space provided by the lithosphere.

The area of land available to man (not covered with ice) is about 134 million square kilometers, classified according to potential productive capacity into four categories:

— High	7 million km ²
— Medium	11 " "
— Low	15 " "
— Zero	101 " "

Croplands, grasslands and forest lands of the world cover the total of the first three classes (33 million km²). Of the zero class, 53 million km² is under some form of grassland or woodland and 48 million km² are virtually non-productive.

Within the high and medium classes of land (fertile and arable) is the main bulk of the food-producing system of the world. Their share of world land is 18 million km² — 13.4% of the total land space of our world. This limited proportion underlines the importance of conservation of our croplands and rangelands. But what actually happens is that millions of hectares of productive land are lost under concrete and asphalt every year. In developed countries, agricultural land is often taken over by aggressive technoproductive systems: industry, urban development, highways, etc. World-

wide loss of land due to this non-agricultural use is 5-7 million ha/year.

In Japan the average (1968-1974) annual loss of cultivated land to housing and urban services including highways and industries was about 55000 ha = 0.15% of the land area of Japan. There may be excuses for the land situation in Japan; but in the USA during 1967-1975 about 2.8 million ha of croplands shifted to non-agricultural uses: the annual rate of conversion was 0.16% of the total stock of cropland — no excuse. In Egypt, nation-wide programmes of reclamation of new lands (river control schemes, irrigation of desert lands, etc.) brought under cultivation during 1955-1975 a total area of 372000 ha, but the loss of prime croplands of the fertile Nile valley and delta due to urban expansion was 400 000 ha.

This worldwide process presents an example of failure in the relationship between the sociosphere and the biosphere (land-use policy). Here we note that in most instances one sociosphere component (land speculation enterprise) operates against the long-term interest of the society.

The calculated average annual losses of agricultural land (Buringh, 1981)⁷ are:

— by non-agricultural use	8 million ha
— by erosion	3 " "
— by desertification	2 " "
— by toxification	2 " "

Losses due to erosion, desertification, toxification are in most instances due to failure in the relationship between the technosphere (means used in land management) and the biosphere resilience of the soil system.

Fresh water is — needless to say — one of the essential requirements of life. There is a verse in the *Quran* (the Muslim holy book containing the message from Allah) by which God says that out of water He created all living things. To make clean water available for all humans is

7. Publ. Agric. Univ. Wageningen, The Netherlands.

an international pledge that is yet to be met. Irrigation is one principal means for making agriculture possible and productive.

But if we consider the volume of water available to us at the global scale, we note that out of the total volume of global waters (1400 million cubic kilometers):

- 97% ocean water (saline);
- 3% freshwater (42 million km³).

Out of this freshwater:

- 77.2% is stored in the ice caps;
- 22.4% is ground water;
- 0.35% is in lakes and swamps;
- 0.04% is in the atmosphere;
- 0.01% is in the rivers.

This shows that the volume of fresh water available for meeting our world-wide needs (40-45 thousand km³) is a small fraction of the total global waters. If this 0.01% could be increased, doubled, we could double our food-producing potential, reclaim all the deserts that cover at present almost 40% of the earth surface. This is a technological problem that is certainly less complex and less difficult than sending man to the moon and bringing him back safe.

The question is: why are we not investing the resources necessary for such a project, while we invest considerable resources of research and development in other projects that do not seem to address the urgent needs of man? This seems to suggest discrepancy in setting our global priorities as related to our global needs. Research programmes on:

- desalination;
- weather modification;
- evaporation suppression;
- water recycling,

receive little support compared to research programmes on armament development. About 400,000 highly qualified scientists are engaged in military research and development (UN, 1978).⁸

This is an example of failure, at the global level, of interactions among the three systems.

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8. UN Publication No. 78.Ix.1, New York.

The present world map shows evident inequalities in population-wealth distribution, that is a non-proportionate pattern of population resources distribution. Certain population groups (countries) seem to have austere resources, others have plenty. Consider food resources: as L. Tweeten (*Worldview*, December 1978) describes it '(1) World food production per capita is greater than at any time, and more people have more to eat. (2) More people consume inadequate amounts of food today than at any time in history. (3) The nexus between these seemingly inconsistent propositions and the crux of the global malnutrition⁹ problem is uneven distribution of resources rather than low volume of food production and consumption.'

The roots are historical. Man settled in larger numbers where resources were apparently ample (river basins) and in sporadic numbers where resources were austere (nomads in arid lands). Biosphere resource changes were mainly related to climatic changes: glacials and inter-glacials, pluvials and inter-pluvials. The incidence of these changes was slow and there was time for populations to re-adjust by migration in responses that were not very different from those of other biota. As glacials gradually (in thousands of years) crept southward over Europe, the population had time to move southward and southeastward towards a warmer climate. Again, as the climatic desiccation evolved in interpluvials, the populations had time to re-adjust by moving towards river basins or less arid regions.

As man's knowledge and ability to manipulate and manage biosphere components increased, new resource-bases became available. But, the evolution of knowledge was slow in earlier history and man's ability for demographic adjustment (migration) was capable of coping with the slow change. But, in modern times, knowledge grew faster and its application in resource development escalated, while abilities for demographic readjustment became gradually impeded by the constraints

9. World Food Council (1977) estimate of chronically hungry and malnourished — over 450 millions.

of political boundaries and national policies.

The history of the Middle East and adjoining regions illustrates this point. Ecological degradations of arid lands caused mass movements from drier territories (Arabian Peninsula) to the fertile lands of river basins in Mesopotamia, Levant, Egypt, etc., reaching westward and northward to the Atlantic coast and Iberia. Population redistributions were commensurate with proportionate adjustment of man-resource relationships. These movements were spurred on by the drive of Islam during the 7th century. In the recent 30-40 years, great wealths of oil resources were discovered and developed within the otherwise resource-austere deserts. There was population influx in the form of migrant labour and expatriate technicians. But, the increase in the size of the resource base was much faster, demographic readjustment was under political controls and ethnic constraints. The outcome was the dramatic rise of the per-head share of wealth in certain parts (e.g., Kuwait) as compared to that in densely populated territories in river basins (e.g., Egypt) and the Fertile Crescent (e.g., Syria).

Demographic adjustments between the densely populated continent of Europe and the newly discovered continents of the Americas and Australia are well documented. But, today there are political and administrative barriers that control migration to these continents.

The result of these controls — global wise — is that there are excesses in certain resources in some parts and extreme shortage of these same resources. Let us consider water. One third of our earth, that is inhabited by more than 600-700 millions, faces shortage of water (desert); other parts with thin population (e.g., Alaska and North Canada) have surplus water. The idea of trans-continental transfer of water from North-American territories with excess to territories with shortages (southwest U.S.A. and Mexico) was explored under schemes of North American Water And Power Alliance (NAWPA). This poses the question: do we move people to where they can develop the

resources of the biosphere, or do we move resources to where people are? The present world seems to favour the latter: transfer resources from areas of excess (rich/donor countries) to areas of shortage (poor/recipient countries). This process of aid and assistance has become part of contemporary negotiations between north and south.

The essence of this is that constraints of the biosphere is hampering the natural capacity of man to cope with changes in the biosphere (e.g., climatic perturbations or changes) and with advancements of the technosphere (capacity to explore and develop resources) through demographic adjustments. At present we have a world population of 4.6 billions, three quarters live in developing countries (share of individual of total available resources is short of the basic requirements) and one quarter lives in developed countries (share of individual of total available resources is excessive: consumer/wasteful societies). This situation of global disparities insults our inherent feeling of the unity of mankind and may eventually undermine the prospects of our future survival.

Mankind has, over the centuries of history, modified the natural assemblages of plants and animals (biomes) all over the world, and changed the distribution of species and their ecological interactions. Many of these changes have been essential elements of development, but have caused the disappearance of natural vegetation from great stretches of continents (e.g. Europe). Where development has been hampered by poverty, and people have to eke out their living under austere biosphere conditions, fertility of the land is often placed in jeopardy. One aspect of this is desertification that now menaces life-support systems of some 600-700 million people:

- 3071 million hectares of range-land,
- 173 million hectares of rainfed cropland,
- 27 million hectares of irrigated cropland.

By these processes of man's action, thousands of species of plants and

animals disappeared and valuable genetic resources are forever lost. The *World Conservation Strategy*¹⁰ sets three basic principles for maintaining balance between man and environment, that is, between the biosphere and biosphere:

1. to maintain essential ecological processes and life-support system,
2. to preserve genetic diversity,
3. to ensure the sustainable utilization of species and the ecosystem.

This is a prescription: conservation for the future survival of man.

International assistance and aid, that is the flow of material resources from donors to recipients, needs to be directed towards ensuring the establishment of indigenous capabilities of managing the complex interactions among the three systems. Without this the assistance, though well meaning, produces no positive results or may even cause harm.

Mankind has divided the world into some 150 units: nation States. Political boundaries are often based on such unnatural bases (e.g., history of colonial administrative boundaries), and bear no relation to natural resource systems, ethnic limits, or bio-geographic setting. Some of these units are ridiculously small in expanse (17 States each with an area less than 1000 sq. km) or in population (35 States each with a population of less than 1000 000). By contrast there are 27 States each of an area of 1000 000 km² or more, and 7 States each with a population of more than 100 millions. Populations swell and boundaries do not extend; boundaries become traps. This global malaise of irrational fragmentation of the world into territorial units is a fact of life and we have to live with it, but the international system, if loyal to the concept of the unity of mankind, should evolve socio-political systems that may undo this untenable situation through regional (political-economic) groupings, and the regional development systems outlined by Mesarovic and Pestel (*Mankind at the Turning Point*, second report to the Club of Rome, 1974).

The microelectronic future

ADAM SCHAFF

IN April this year the new Report to the Club of Rome under the title 'Microelectronics and Society. For better or for worse?' was published. The title of this Report reflects the dilemma its authors were facing and my task here is to make clear the message they wanted to transmit. It can be presented in the following way. Humanity is in the initial stage of the greatest and deepest going scientific and industrial revolution in the history of mankind. This development, which for various reasons cannot and should not be stopped, can be beneficial to man but it could also become disastrous, leading towards social pathology, if some of its inherent social consequences are not foreseen and understood in due time, thus stimulating social activities aiming at neutralisation and possibly the full elimination of negative phenomena which could occur in this new social situation.

The literature concerning microelectronics and its different aspects is vast, but it deals mainly — if not exclusively — with the technological side of the problem. So far as the social consequences of the micro-electronic revolution are concerned

— and it is a fullfledged revolution for similar reasons as those which induce us to qualify the technological changes at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries as the first industrial revolution — the appropriate literature is scarce and poor and, so far as some important problems are concerned, practically nonexistent. For this very reason, the new Report to the Club of Rome fills a serious gap in the domain of this problematic, being the first attempt in world literature to present a quasi full picture of the questions concerned.

But why is this the case? Why could such a lacuna exist in our reflections and therefore in the appropriate literature? The answer to this question is not only a luxury caused by our curiosity but is essential for understanding what kind of brakes are operating on our reasoning about these problems and, in consequence, on our becoming active to overcome them.

It is so astonishing that, already confronted with a fullfledged revolution in our way of life — starting

with gadgets and simple instruments to the most complicated implementations of automation in different realms of human activity; knowing about the most spectacular changes that will occur soon in the domain of communication — including holography, distant conferences of people to be seen on a screen around one table but in reality not leaving their different continents, telephone calls with the conversation partners visible in three-dimensional form, etc.; knowing from practice — this case is the most astonishing one — or from literature about the fantastic development of automation and robotization which made it possible in Japan for the industrial milieu to raise the postulate of abolishing physical work in industry by the end of the century, and it goes without saying that the same concerns many types of mental work which can be even more easily achieved; living in this complex reality, living in the stream of this new scientific and technological revolution and not being aware of its social, possibly dangerous, disastrous consequences, the question 'why?' is fully comprehensible.

The question is simple then but the answer, however, must be sophisticated. It belongs to the realm of social psychology. If we eliminate — not as non-existent but not to be easily generalised — the motivation of conscious lies to mislead other people, to hide the reality from them, the only valid answer that remains is to look at the mechanism of cognitive dissonance which permits us to understand the phenomenon.

The theory of cognitive dissonance, formulated by Leo Festinger in the 1950s, can be reduced to the following thesis. If man finds himself in a situation of conflict — which occurs often not only to individuals but also to specifically structured groups of people — when his ideas, beliefs and attitudes (in the sense of readiness to act) do not correspond with the objective reality and are falsified by this reality, then three possibilities arise.

(a) To change reality in such a way so that it starts to correspond with our ideas, beliefs and attitudes;

this normally proves to be impossible.

(b) To change our ideas, beliefs and attitudes to make them correspond with reality; this is easier but often it would mean an ideological catastrophe for the person or group of people involved and therefore they will resist the acceptance of such a solution to the utmost.

(c) To ignore the evidence of facts, to close one's mind to them, to become immune to the voice of reality which falsifies our beliefs. This third possibility — it is not a theoretical speculation but an empirically verified theory — is just the defence mechanism of cognitive dissonance interesting us. It causes a sort of schizophrenia, *social schizophrenia*, when man understands intellectually what we are telling him but erases emotionally the content of the statement heard or read because its acceptance would demolish his beliefs which are dear to his heart, a typically schizophrenic situation when a man knows something and at the same time does not know it. It seems strange but it is an empirically verified thesis. This mechanism functions all the more easily when we have to deal not with a clear statement of facts but with a handicap, psychologically impeding their perception.

Now the facts we are dealing with belong to the classical class of those which activate the defensive mechanism of cognitive dissonance: in the case of those who are afraid of losing the momentum and the extra profits linked with the expansion of the microelectronic market if a mass campaign against the 'job killers', similar to the anti-nuclear one, were to be launched; or of those who are building up the superiority of their country on the basis of their superiority in developing the microelectronic revolution, in the first place in the domain of the military establishment, etc..

To make it clear: the authors of the Report 'Microelectronics and Society' did not pursue any extremist aim. We did not regard the microelectronic revolution as a social calamity but as a product and achievement of incredible human

progress, which however entails possible dangers if they are not counteracted properly and in time; we did not strive to stop the development, understanding its beneficial elements and the practical impossibility to achieve such a stoppage because of international competition, especially in the domain of the military establishment. What we wanted then was to stir up public opinion, showing the potential dangers and pleading for the necessity to fight against them.

Striving at giving a quasi full picture of the situation, the group of authors — each representing a different field of interest in the domain — took up various sides of the problematic, from explaining the technological background to presenting various economic, social and political consequences of the on-going industrial revolution. Surely, there are lacunas in the picture: either because an appropriate competent author was not available (e.g., the domain of education) or because the problem is so huge and important that although hinted at in a chapter of the Report, it calls for a special many-sided study (e.g., the consequences of the microelectronic revolution for the third world).

We can have discussions concerning the tempo and ways of the development of automation and full automation in the field of production and office work but there can be no opposition to the thesis that this development is now inevitable and, with a bit of insight and imagination — and both are necessary for any fruitful revision in the domain of social life — we can foretell that in 20-30 years from now, i.e., in the life span of one generation, it will become a major factor dominating the whole life of human society, bringing about great economic and social changes in this domain.

Anew, let us leave aside the discussions concerning which domains of traditional work will be left intact after the triumphal march of automation and what this will mean quantitatively as far as people's occupations will be concerned. One thing, however, is certain if we think

fationally and are not being mentally protected by the mechanism of cognitive dissonance: with the victory of automation and robotization vast structural unemployment will become a reality and the main burden of it will fall on the shoulders of the young generation. Two problems are linked as a consequence with this development: an economic and a social one.

The economic problem is simple and clear. Having to cope with the problems of hundreds of millions of unemployed people (already tens of millions exist in the developed countries) who, especially the young generation, will find the ways closed towards work in the traditional sense of the word and towards working to earn money for their living, society will be obliged, if it wishes to avoid revolutions, to take over the burden of covering the material needs of these people on an historically given level of their development. This is unavoidable, but this means the necessity for a fundamental change in the distribution of social wealth which entails a fundamental change of social structure.

The ways towards achieving these changes and their forms can and will be different in various societies, but something common underlies them all: if the society is to distribute the national income in a new way, it must have the power to dispose of this income in a new way. This inevitably means major changes in the domain of private property which makes many people afraid. This perspective then becomes an impetus to activate the mechanism of cognitive dissonance but this is an unavoidable consequence of the microelectronic revolution. The solution of problems thus arising is relatively simple even if painful for those who are concerned.

The second and more complicated problem — I would also say the most important — is the social one. It consists of the following: if work, in the traditional sense of the word, was the basis of the motivation of human activities and in this meaning the so-called 'sense of life' of human beings on a mass scale, then the loss of this 'sense of life', espe-

cially so far as young people are concerned, must be compensated by different types of activities other than work if we wish to avoid the danger of a pathological society. Why learn and study, why be active in a socially useful way if you get what you need for your physical survival from society anyway? Is it not true that when the incentive of work is lost, we can lose the 'sense of life' and our expanding leisure time can in the end become 'polluted', exposing — the young generation first of all — to the temptation of drugs, alcoholism, perverted sex, etc., as can already be observed now? Is not this the way towards a pathological society? These questions are rhetorical but the answer is clear. Something must be done and for these activities to have a prophylactic character they must already start now, trying to counteract a social calamity which could otherwise become a reality in a not too distant future.

In this respect there are two schools of thought; the one calls for a specific laissez-faire policy, the second asks for specific activities in this domain, to be undertaken now. There are two main arguments of the adherents of a laissez-faire policy: first, till now all great dilemmas of human history were solved spontaneously by the historical development itself, so why should this not be the case now too? Second, if we look at the way of life of primitive people comprising a lot of leisure time, we see that they do not have any trouble with the lack of work; should we not then leave contemporary man too with his leisure time and not worry about losing the 'sense of life' because he has eliminated work?

Alas, both arguments are void and are misleading pseudo-arguments.

Concerning the first, even if it were true that social conflict situations were solved spontaneously in the past, it is not true that the same will therefore happen now too; the argument is a typical logical non sequitur, because changed conditions of the contemporary situation do not make it possible to accept the analogy with the past as

a safe and certain basis for the appraisal of today's problems and their perspectives. But, in addition to this, the point of departure of this reasoning is false: it is not true that in the past major social conflicts were always solved spontaneously because we know the example of many past civilizations — in reality, the majority of them — which collapsed under the weight of such conflicts and died out.

Concerning the second, it is false to apply the model of the way of life of primitive people to modern man because he has a different, historically structured, social character and different needs linked with this character; in addition, the judgement concerning 'leisure time' of the so-called primitive people is false — it consists in reality of various occupations which, because they have a different form from what we call 'work', is mistaken for leisure.

What we are asking for is not to leave our children — they are at stake — at the mercy of a 'laissez faire' policy, remaining passive observers but to take on our responsibility in preparing for this not too distant future by elaborating alternative solutions for replacing work by occupation and thus giving an alternative for the work-based 'sense of life'.

The Report tackles this problem in the last, 'futurological' chapter. It also proposes a solution: continuous learning with an enormous programme of preparatory activities to change the traditional curricula. But this is not meant as a panacea, rather as a sensible suggestion on how to solve this complicated problem.

And this is in line with the aim of this Report and its message: to make man aware of the new problematic, to try to wake up from dreams of cognitive dissonance those who have fallen asleep under its charm and to say to man: you cannot expect wonderful spontaneous solutions to the problem but you should start to be active now. This is your responsibility today, for the sake of your children; tomorrow could already be too late.

Books

ENTROPY, A NEW WORLD VIEW by Jeremy Rifkin with Ted Howard. The Viking Press, New York, 1980.

DOOMSDAY theories are not new. They have existed in pre-history, contained in mythology and folklore — in primeval memory. So far, man has been ingenious enough to avert disaster although, at times, he has been perilously close to it. It is perhaps because these prophecies have been belied that doomsday theorists are not taken too seriously. Be that as it may, many of their ideas have undoubtedly had a profound effect on our thinking and action, albeit in a reactive manner. In Jeremy Rifkin's book we have another futuristic scenario but with a difference — it is based on a natural law.

The first law of thermodynamics states that all matter in the universe is constant, that it cannot be created or destroyed. The second law states that matter and energy can only be changed from usable to unusable, from available to unavailable or from ordered to disordered. This is the Entropy Law — the principle of dissipation of energy. Entropy is the measure of the extent of this dissipation. Thus 'whenever a semblance of order is created anywhere on earth or in the universe, it is done at the expense of causing an even greater disorder in the surrounding environment?'

These principles of natural science are taught in elementary physics courses and have become commonplace. Jeremy Rifkin's book takes the Entropy Law as the foundation for his futuristic construct.

According to him, once the totality of the implications of entropy are fully realised it must lead to a total revolution in our thought processes about economics, politics, sociology, ethics and religion — in other words, in man's world view. It will be the inevitable basis for the new world paradigm.

Our present framework is a mechanistic one influenced by Bacon, Descartes and Newton. The fundamental natural laws discovered by these savants were transmuted into laws of society, politics and economics by John Locke and Adam Smith. Since then, all philosophers and social scientists have been followers in the same tradition, differing in analysis and emphasis but essentially true to the mechanical world paradigm. This mechanical age has been characterised by belief in the concept of progress in which the less ordered world of nature is harnessed by man to create a more ordered material environment. Science and technology are the instruments for such transformation.

The second law of thermodynamics has changed all this. The progress achieved so far and rationalised by the extant world view is not progress at all. On the contrary, it is exponentially escalating regression — the road to destruction. Material entropy is continually increasing and must ultimately reach a maximum which is also the most disordered state. From the intense concentration of energy preceding the 'big bang', we are moving to a state of heat death. Biologically speaking, evolution is creating larger and larger islands of order at the expense of even greater seas of disorder. This, however, is an infinitesimally slow process. The problem is man — the only living being with 'exosomatic' instruments

to hasten the process which he is doing at an alarming pace. Unless there is a fundamental change of course, the end is near.

All major social changes have come with entropy watersheds 'when all of the accumulated increases in entropy result in a qualitative change in the energy source of the environment itself.' At this critical point a new order emerges. The world is poised at the threshold of just such an epochal moment — a shift from depleting fossil fuels to solar energy. This will demand a shift from a 'colonising' (exploitative) to a 'climactic' (balanced) mode of existence. Rifkin's prophesy is that this will be the 'last great energy watershed' because the ultimate source of all energy is the sun.

Currently used sources of energy and the dependent institutional superstructure are about to exhaust themselves both physically and in terms of cost-effectiveness. Depletion is proceeding over an exponential path which makes the impending crisis even more frightening. 'The exponentiality of the technology fix is a one-way ticket to disaster for life and for the planet earth.' Research and development in new high technology is far too energy intensive to be sustainable. It is also leading to super-specialisation and counterproductive centralisation (government and megacorporations) which threaten human freedoms and the essential quality of life.

Harnessing an impressive array of authorities, telling facts and dramatic snippets, Rifkin analyses the possibility of nuclear fusion, microprocessors, space exploration, deep sea bed mining, et al, as possible means of extending the life term of the present strategy but eliminates them as even more entropy-intensive and, therefore, non-viable. Thus, the technology optimists are barking up the wrong tree. The only option is to enter the solar age and redesign the entire techno-socio eco-political system on a lower energy intensive curve.

Drawing upon Christian doctrine, Schumacher, Mao Zedong and Gandhi, Rifkin sketches a new world view of appropriate technologies, organic farming, self-sufficient community-based economic activity, de-urbanised societies, decentralised democratic structures and a non-material socialised value system. In short, a solar energy based Ram Rajya.

Undoubtedly, Rifkin develops an appealing argument based on an incontrovertible scientific principle. Whether we have heard, as he claims, the last word on the nature of matter and energy will continue to be debated by scientists. However, as it stands today, the second law of thermodynamics has a universality. Rifkin's paradigm centred on this principle is a masterful extension of a natural law into a holistic view of human affairs. And his simple, unpedantic style with a vast amount of interesting information makes for strength though purists may look for more sophisticated methodology. Most important, the message comes through, loud and clear.

The industrialised world cannot continue on its insane path strewn with toxic food, polluted cities, automobile graveyards and neutron bombs. Without basic changes they will surely self-destruct and, in the process, take a large part of mankind with them. There is an equally important lesson for the third world. Unthinking pursuit of the growth syndrome in emulation of the industrialised nations cannot succeed. Apart from the physical constraints of resources required to reach western levels of living, the process of getting there is bound to cause untold suffering to millions which would itself tear asunder many a social system that has withstood the centuries. Even if we were to reach those material heights, do we really want a way of life which eventually brings only social alienation, individual neurosis, organisational centralisation and national militarism? It is not possible to evade these moral issues in the pursuit of growth or even development.

The trouble is, when recommended by thinkers from the affluent West, people in the poor countries see such teaching as yet another subterfuge to keep them in a state of poverty, degradation and subjugation. This is unfortunate because it also shuts out some hard truths alongwith the subterfuge. After all, the rediscovery of Gandhi's economic and social philosophy in India is really a recognition of these very issues. Regrettably the idiom of those propagating these views is still the old one which lacks credibility because so much has changed since. What is required is an extensive debate on where we want to go, taking into account present day realities.

Having commended Rifkin's bold presentation as meriting consideration, it must also be noted that he has nothing to say about how the new world view gets established. Will it be the economic and social breakdown of the capitalist system, revolution, war or a new messiah? Clearly, it is inadequate to talk of a new paradigm without analysing the dynamics and mechanics of how the change comes about. After all, the widespread application of solar energy within the present system is also around the corner. And the third world still has vast sources of untapped energy resources, including hydel and fossil fuels, which could sustain material growth into the foreseeable future. Why should the existing power structure change course in a direction that threatens its own stranglehold? The source of this power and its dynamic has neither been identified nor adequately dealt with in Rifkin's presentation. This gap is a major weakness in an otherwise stimulating work.

'Societies, like individuals, have their moral crises and their spiritual revolutions', wrote R.H. Tawney. It is obvious that modern industrial society is in the midst of such a catharsis. The spiritual revolution is yet to come. Jeremy Rifkin has made a brave attempt to develop the outlines of a new order. There will certainly be others for whom this outline will be a useful reference point.

Ashok Jaitly



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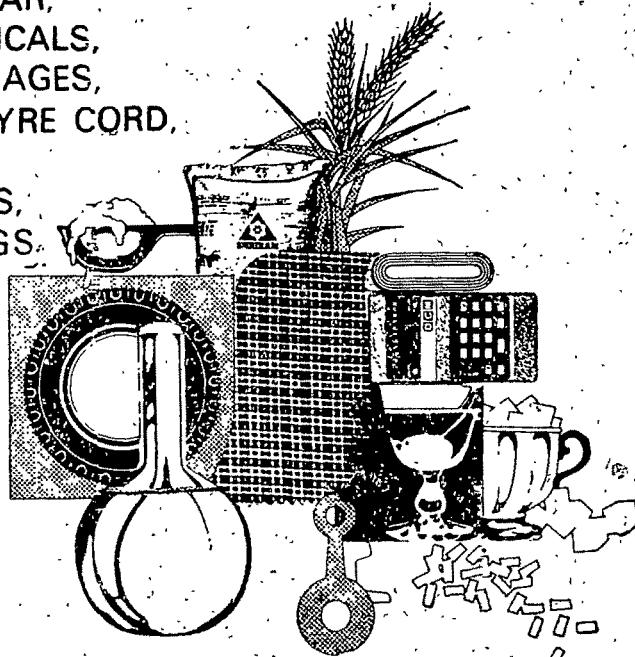
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TOTAL DEVELOPMENT: Essays Towards an Integration of Marxian and Gandhian Perspectives
by K.J. Charles. Vikas Publishing House.

THE volume under review comprises a collection of critical essays on the existing economic and social order. The author recognises the Marxian and Gandhian perspectives to be powerful methods by which to comprehend the fundamental inadequacies of capitalist societies. So far so good. The author also raises many issues central to any discussion on development and the search for viable alternatives. Even better. However, the treatment of these problems is most unfortunate.

The first essay on the 'Economic Goals of Society' is a case in point. The author provides a straightforward critique of capitalist societies with a liberal garnishing of quotations from Marx. In trying to provide a concrete example of a superior alternative, the author cites the Soviet Union. The interests of the broader masses are perceived as being congruent with those of the State. The failures and systematic distortions from this point of view are conveniently explained away as being the result of 'compulsions of survival'.

The author rhapsodises 'in spite of major obstacles to the success of the socialist experiment, the Soviet Union has gone further than any country in bringing about the reduction of inequalities, in eradicating poverty and unemployment and in producing a highly conscious and cultivated human being.' With this kind of conclusion, one is not quite sure as to what the terms equality, freedom and consciousness mean to the author; nor does the author explain in what way an average Soviet citizen is more 'conscious and cultivated' than his counterpart in western Europe.

Another basic problem with the volume is that there appears to be no integration of the two perspectives as providing the basis of a critique. The author upholds Gandhian views on industry and its culture and with the same breath wholly condones the Soviet Union's version of technological gigantism. The similar sort of development in capitalist countries is held up for censure. More schizophrenic still is the approval given to the pattern of development in South Korea and Taiwan. Here the rationalisations for their models of economic success are on the grounds that such development has enabled them to decolonise themselves economically. There is no mention of the fact that both these countries are ruthlessly capitalistic and that, too, with severely authoritarian governments. One can only exonerate the above on the presumption that the author is allowing himself the luxury of an excessively dialectical view of history!

In an essay on Marx and Gandhi, the author attempts to show that the views of Marx and Gandhi are tending not towards solarity but convergence, that these men intellectually shared more than is commonly attributed to them. This may be a valid standpoint. But the level at which the two approa-

ches have been reconciled is so facile as to reduce both to their lowest common denominator and render the insights into the philosophic bases of the two approaches trivial.

On the question of violence, stray references by Gandhi on the preferability of violence to cowardice are used to show how Gandhi entertained no absolute aversion to violence, and to that extent both Marx and Gandhi saw violence as being only a necessary evil. This kind of vulgar reconciliation not only fails to capture the basis of Gandhian non-violence but also glosses over the profound difference between Gandhi and Marx on the whole question of change and the ethics of the means employed to effect such change.

In 'Some Further Thoughts on Decentralisation', the author argues persuasively about the ravages of the existing division of labour as it stunts man morally and intellectually. As a corrective, the author argues for a more decentralised production machinery, not only in providing a more healthy and wholesome context of work and existence but also because it would ease the strain on the desperately sparse resources of society and the ecological system at large.

The author has read extensively — indeed, the book is virtually littered with quotations and footnotes — but the issues covered comprise a mixed bag, not coherent enough to afford an integrated world-view. Nor can the book be deemed to qualify as an assortment of essays reflecting random thoughts. From an abstract discussion on 'the General Theory of Reality', the author takes up themes as specific as 'Gandhi's Views on Health', and 'Varieties of the Brain Drain'.

The most commendable feature of the book is that the author shows a concern about human welfare, is willing to stick his neck out and take a stand on issues. Conversely, this attribute becomes diluted when one sees the author's complete inability — or is it disdain? — to sustain consistently an argument or point of view. The reader's patience is further stretched by periodic punctuations in the prose of unmasticated quotations from the Greats. At Rs. 95 the volume is over-priced, the general level of analysis common and low-brow, the title pretentious and the reading fairly tortuous.

Aditi Mehta

AN EVOLUTIONARY VIEW OF ECONOMIC GROWTH by Ashok S. Guha. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981.

THE age of biology is here. Most world watchers have already recognised the fact that bio-technology and its attendant studies will dominate the future. The advantage of this 'new wave' is that biological processes, like all real life processes, depend on symbiosis for existence, perpetuation and growth. Economic science has tended to lack a healthy world-view in the recent past and this must rapidly change.

if the irrelevance of and disenchantment with contemporary economics is to be reduced.

Ashok S. Guha's work is part of the emerging new trend of economic studies which seek to relate economics, history and anthropology, ethology and genetics. Partially because of Guha's preoccupation with political thought, influenced perhaps by the milieu he works in, history and political thought have tended to dominate in his analysis. This does not detract however from the philosophy of an interdisciplinary approach where rigour is replaced by reality to obtain results of a more consequential nature.

The implications of the evolutionary view of growth that Guha studies are several. Development, he says, 'should be measured in terms of the simpler phenomena that accompany it' — biological improvement being the most universally recognised one. The second consequence is the recognition of a certain similarity in rhythm between the two, (above named), processes. The third implication is the possible difference in the path of evolution for non-interrelated sub-systems. The evolutionary view also helps to alter the understanding of what was recognised as merely a complex process, with its innovative mechanism.

Guha's study has 'its implications for the choice of development strategies in various economies. In India, the proliferation of the middle class through the expansion of the bureaucracy, the educational establishment, and the army and the consequent growth of a mass market for manufacture is one of the most distinctive features of development. So is the support of the investments' incentives of the indigenous bourgeoisie through protection, subsidy, government contracts, and the like.'

Again, notes Guha, 'In India, the distribution of power is complex and multipolar as is characteristic of a commercialized society. It is incompatible with the centralization of economic power under full-scale socialism or of political power under a truly authoritarian dictatorship. Democracy — as the only form of compromise, however inefficient, between a diversity of evenly balanced groups and classes — continues to be the only viable political mode.'

The danger of this line of argument is the possibility of giving flimsy theoretical postulates a sound rationale. No study of the evolution of economic practices and trends of any nation can claim to be infallible. Guha may be on marginally sounder ground when he says, 'If the rise of Athenian democracy is an effect of population increase in the presence of export opportunity, the growth of feudalism in the medieval West is the consequence of military pressure on a society where trade, transport, and the fiscal basis of authority are alike on the brink of extinction.'

Extending this to explain cyclicity in innovation is difficult and using such explanatory variables to

discern possibilities of future international inequality is foolhardy. What is admirable in this entire exercise is the resurrection of a whole-world view that has long been ignored. Juxtaposing Athens, modern Britain, Korea, India and China, albeit with specific reference to a few central characteristics is an admirable academic exercise. Guha has handled this task well.

It is heartening that scholars like Guha have begun to adapt to the new thinking process that economists all over the world are beginning to adopt. Much more work needs to be done in this area and social scientists need to take this inter-disciplinary method of study to ensure the long term relevance of their own self-centred disciplines.

Dilip Cherian

DESTINATION MAN: TOWARDS A NEW WORLD by S.K. Dey. New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1982.

INDIA: An Uncommitted Society by J. C. Kapur. New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1982.

DESTINATION Man: Towards a New World recounts the life story of a celebrity. The celebrity is none other than the author himself. The life story starts with the account of a sporty, daring, hopelessly naive boy hailing from a poor and conservative landlord family in the backwaters of Eastern Bengal. His quest of his destiny takes him to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he earns a Masters of Science degree. He then joins a multi-national firm in India as a top sales executive.

In the earlier part of his journey, Dey acquires various assets such as eclecticism, self-assurance, a certain truculence and occasional fits of pique. Giving up his plush job in June 1947 over the issue of Provident Fund payment, he discovers a new role, first at the Kurukshetra refugee camp and then at Nilokheri and finally ends up as a Minister in the Government of India responsible for giving effect to the Community Development programme.

Needless to say, the Community Development programme which aroused a new hope for the regeneration of Indian society, ended in failure. This is in a sense symptomatic of Dey's world itself. A dream based on desperate ideas and institutions does not usually jell and when it explodes like a bubble, it leaves behind a trail of frustration, bitterness and impotent anger. It is to the credit of Dey that he has not allowed his life and thinking to be clouded over by the failure of the great social experiment. Instead, he clings to the grandeur of his dream world still hoping to mould this obstinate reality on that gossamer like pattern.

But, to be fair, Dey believes in decentralised development. Little does he realise the anomaly of

decentralised development working within the framework of a top-down centralised planning system through vast impersonal bureaucracies. It is a faith tied more to the values of decentralization than to any deep thinking on the strategies of development required for realising those values. In practice, the idea of self-reliant and participatory local development is replaced by active State intervention to remedy past maldistribution of resources and opportunities through structural reforms and enforced integration of micro-communities in macro-economic orders, even if it means by-passing of human development and evisceration of micro-communities in the Leviathan of the State.

Given his faith, it is therefore not surprising to find Dey taking up in part two of the book the theme of 'Unending Horizon'. It is a truly terrible piece of gauche summary of various flash points in the world, the ideological divide and the power games that are responsible for east-west confrontation, the dependency syndrome, the north-south dialogue (or lack of it), the flabbiness of the UN system, the alienating life styles, the ecological imbalance, the youth in turmoil, and what have you. The lessons, such as they are, hardly differ from the pontifical statements of the officials in various development fora. They lead to the same double bind of centralised democracy and economic development, in which the contemporary man finds himself.

The final call is a piece of bathos: '... the cosmic law provides but for the wages of labour... If the scale tilts one way it must tilt the other way as well. There is room, but for eternal balance; or else the cosmos will reduce to chaos. Love creates; hate retards; the choice is open.' Such is the purpose of this egregious publication.

India: an Uncommitted Society, on the other hand, deals with the future. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, far-reaching changes are taking place in the world at a more rapid pace than ever before in human history. Possibilities for the future are wide open; between satisfaction of human needs and a decent life for all people, or destruction of all or large parts of life due to the indiscriminate use of chemicals and fertilizers, shortage of resources, runaway and rapacious technologies, depletion of fossil fuels, overcommitment to traditional energy sources, lop-sided development priorities, and the ultimate stupidity of a nuclear holocaust. Literature on either of the possibilities is by now quite abundant.

Indeed, the relation between technological innovations and human sensibility is variable. It all depends on how one sees the future of mankind — brightly or darkly. For J.C. Kapur, the future of the mal-developed north and its affiliates in the south is bleak and the future of the uncommitted, resource-rich south is bright. Adopting the campus style debunking of the contemporary, self-destructive civilization, he adds yet another book to the already

extensive literature on reformed versions of the dominant paradigm of development, and posits what he considers an alternative, anti-model of national development for the uncommitted societies. The result is yet another model — a model that obfuscates more than it clarifies.

Much of the book repeats the usual dire warnings of the approaching catastrophe and paints a doomsday picture. Then it slips into making much of the obvious, such as the diversification of renewable energy sources. There are many such novel revelations in store. The reader is told that almost everywhere development is unresponsive to basic needs because of distorted world views, wrong choice of technologies and the dynamics of these runaway technologies. It does not matter for Kapur if he misses the salience of politics which sets the parameters of development and its various components, including the choice of technologies.

Let the scoffers scoff. Kapur is an undaunted crusader in search of an equilibrium model of development, especially for India. For him the route to achieve 'it lies through 'an effective programme for development and growth' by relating 'the national power to the world system through a choice of regional or international alignments or neutralization processes.' With its 'techno-economic structure', 'foreign exchange reserves', 'food-surpluses', 'trained manpower', low-commitment to any particular 'system of development', and absence of 'collaborative relationship with major power centres', India retains, for Kapur, a near maximum capacity for reaching 'a new synthesis...of decentralised rural communities and highly centralised technology-based key industries...' It is a kind of synthesis through which, Kapur holds, India 'made extensive gains in the 1950s and 1960s' but which was lost due to 'negative trends' since then. Hence the need for a new synthesis.

If self-inflicted wounds and lower level of commitment to high technologies alone can spur societies to choose a more rational path to development, the western world was ripe enough in the twenties and the thirties to abandon its attempts to reach out for the consumerist mirage. In fact, underlying the conflict about choice of development goals and strategies is the simple fact that politics goes for quick results with the minimum of sacrifice in the present. As a consequence, options for most societies are foreclosed. Hence the need to spell out strategies for the alternative (preferably alternatives) in a plural world is urgent.

Since Indians have little penchant for discussing the future, particularly if it is fearsome, Kapur's effort is welcome. However, it is a pity that he is neither able to discover any unifying significant political terrain to embed his alternative in, nor has he gone beyond identifying India as capable of averting the doomsday or the 'future shock' which awaits most nations that count.

R.K. Srivastava

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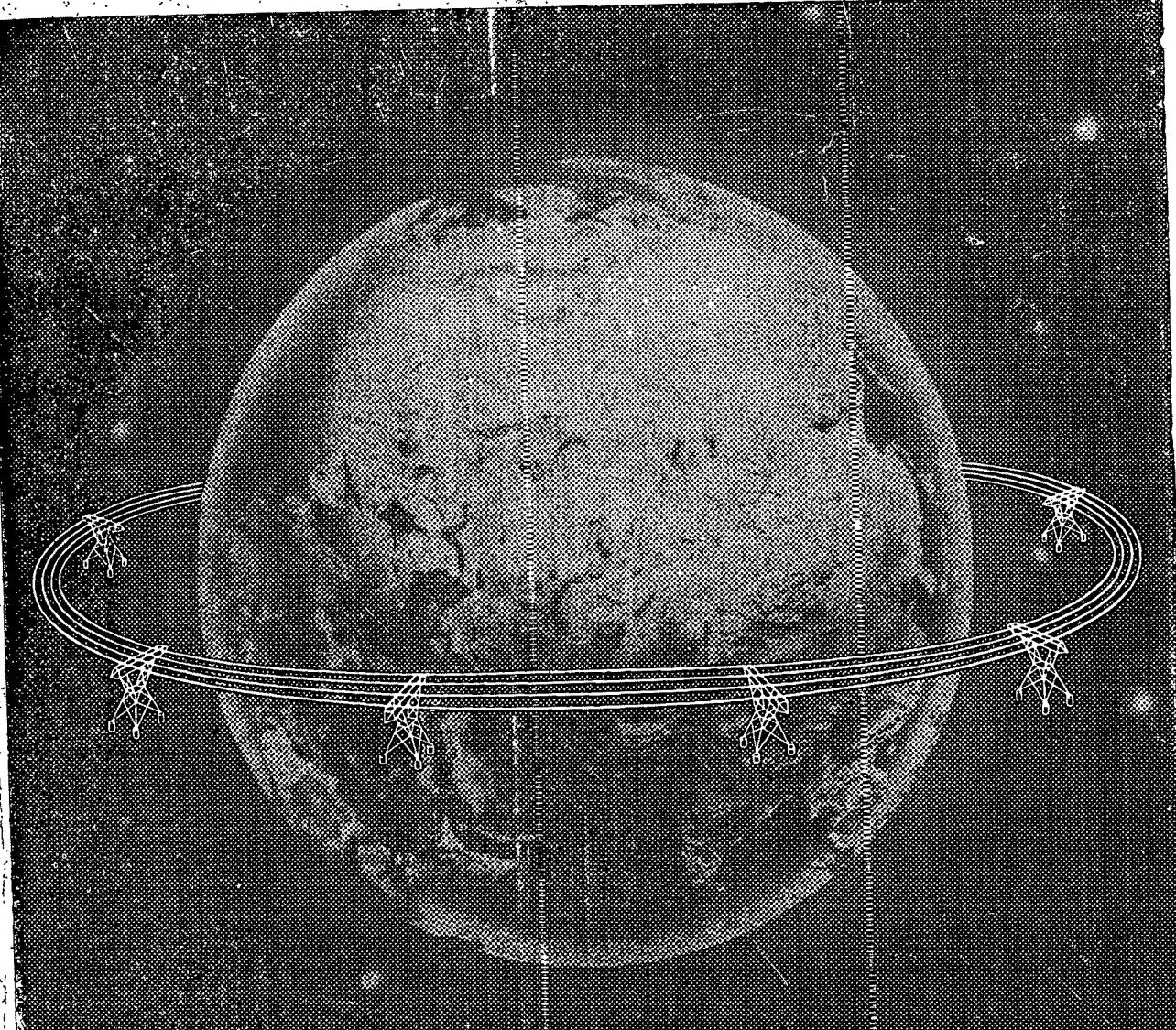
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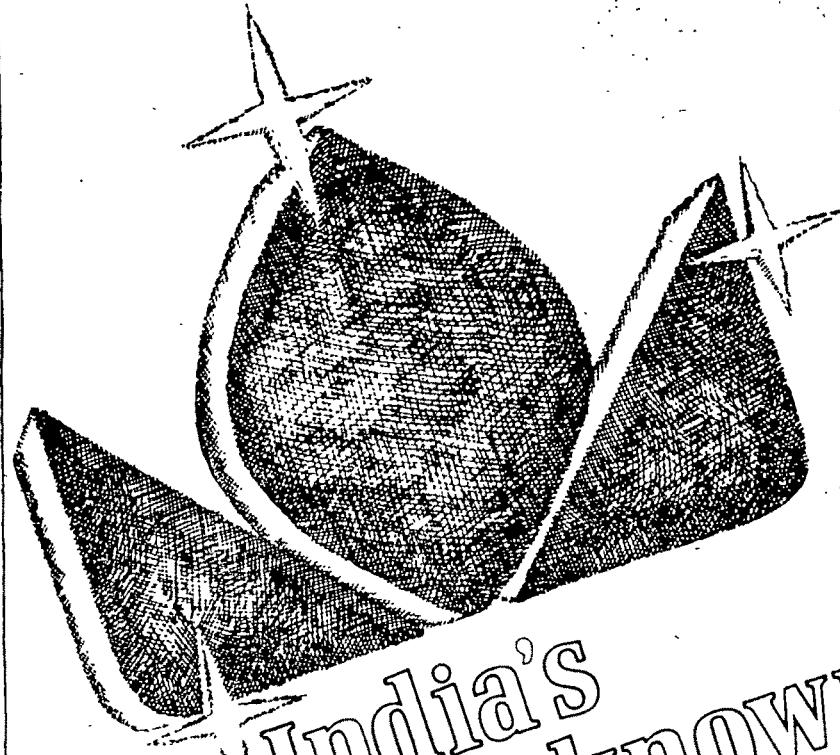
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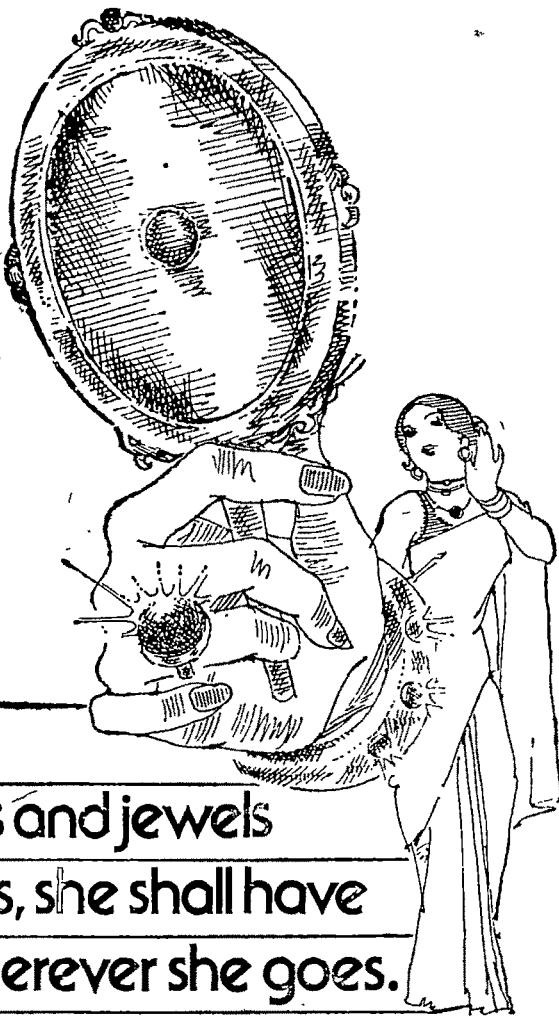
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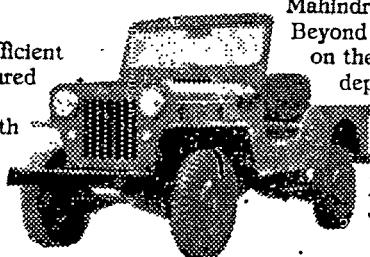
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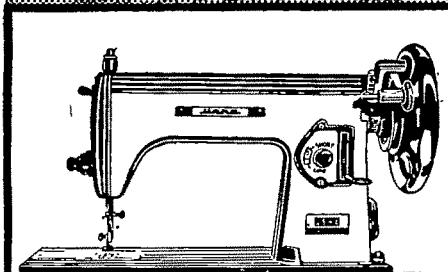
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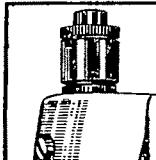
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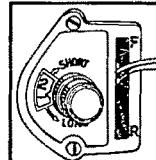
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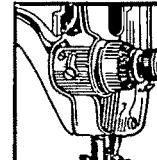
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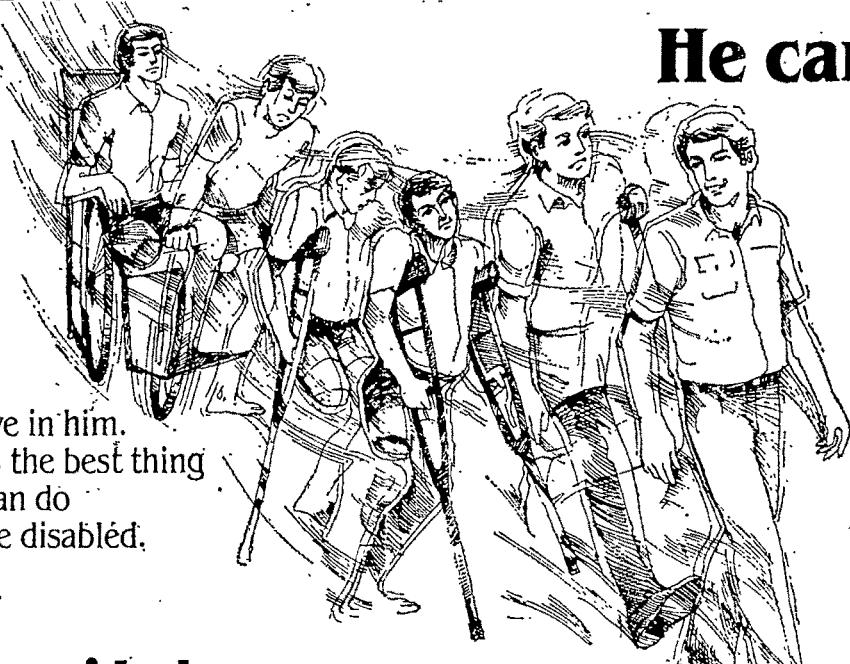
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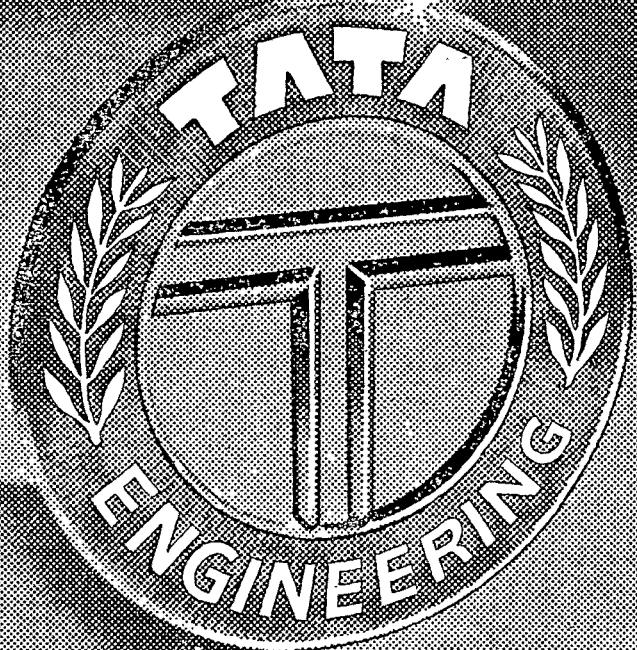


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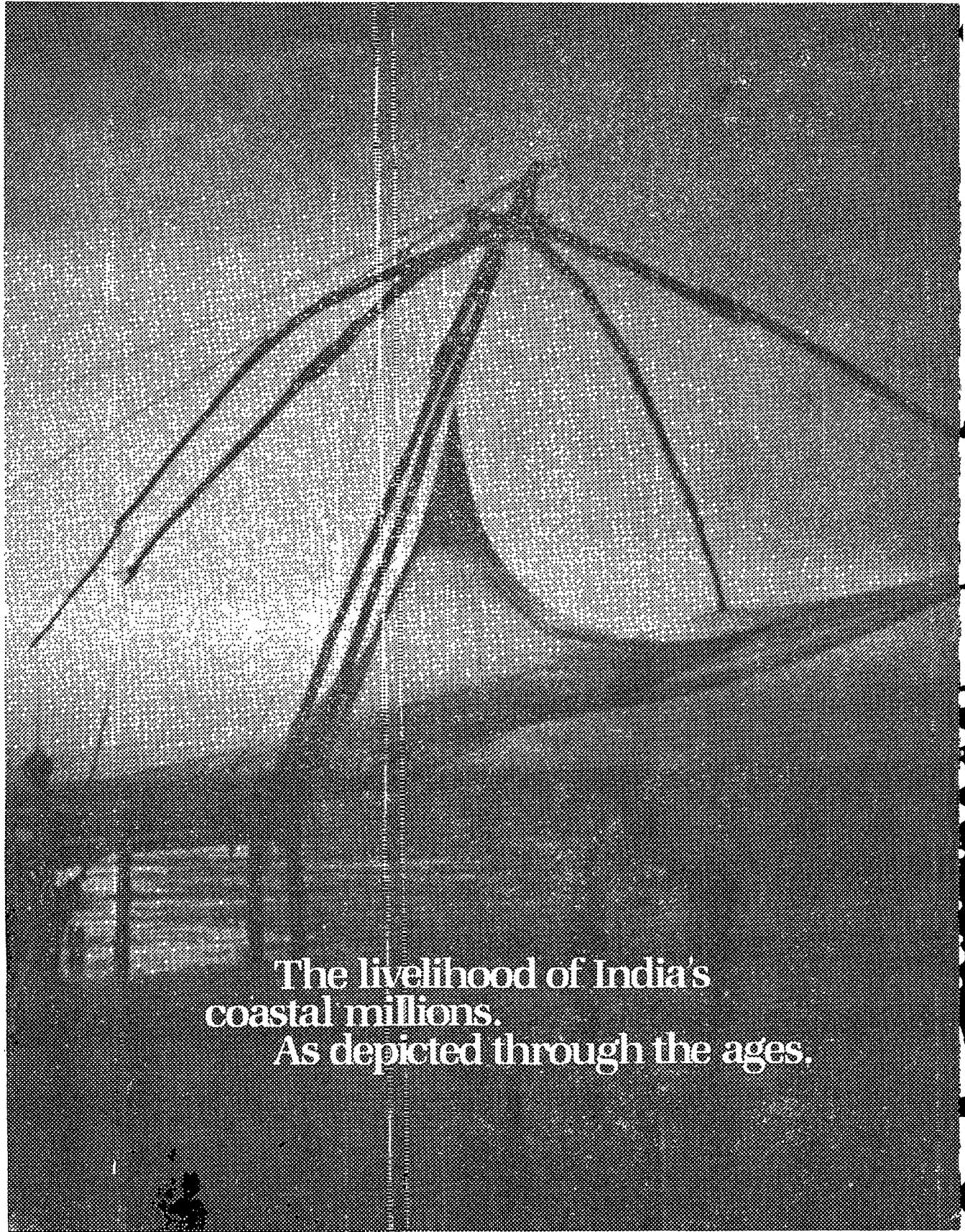
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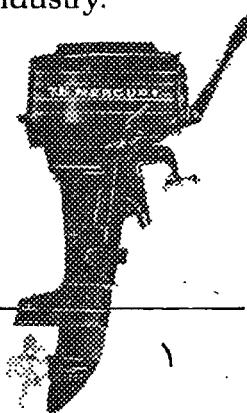
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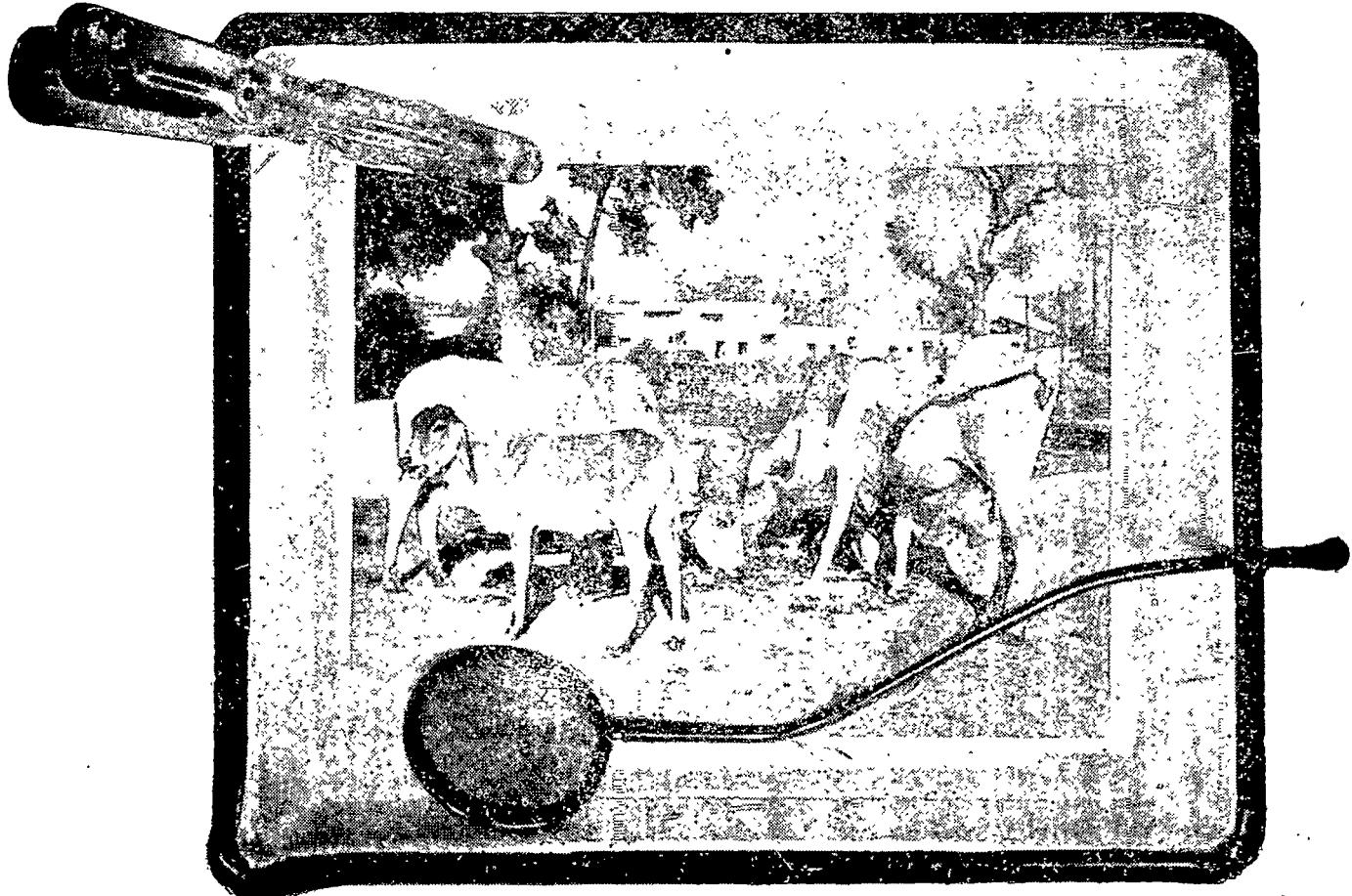
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SECURITY

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THE PROBLEM
A short statement of
the issues involved

OF FISHES AND SCORPIONS
Narinder Singh, teaches at the Zakir Husain Centre
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COVER
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The problem

AT this moment of deepening global crisis, when many see the frenzied armament drive at the root of our problems of growth and survival, we have gathered some thinking on the broad theme of 'security' which is a permanent obsession wherever national policies are under debate and formulation. The trouble, as the great Einstein said, is that everything has changed 'save our mode of thinking'. By and large, the great mass of analysis and assessment, particularly on aspects of 'security', national and international, is caught in this trap of rigid thinking. So many of those who influence public opinion on 'security' matters are happy to be rigid. And, very often, in the 'non-aligned' world, dogmas are certainly not the exclusive preserve of religions. It is against this background that the effort has to be made to open the mind to the incredible possibilities of a world purged of war, secure in

peace and able to settle the tangles of human and national relationships in civilised and rational discussion. Fortunately, these desires are no longer utopian. Everywhere, they are beginning to be viewed as the only alternative to the scenarios of first and second strikes, of kill and over-kill. The advance of science and the technologies it has spawned are seen in terms of destructive power, deadly accurate, computerised, and capable of being miniaturised. Global perspectives about the future are dominated by these lengthening shadows. Every now and then, SEMINAR will remind its readers of these realities, as it does with this issue. Our thinking must change with change. And with courage we must isolate those who wallow in the lazy comfort of rigid, un-changing thought.

Of fishes and scorpions

NARINDAR SINGH

FOR almost forty years now, the United States of *Capitalist* America and the Union of Soviet *Socialist* Republics or, rather, their establishments, have forced the world to watch and to pay for an exceedingly expensive and dangerous farce, which is commonly but quite mistakenly referred to as the nuclear arms race between the two; and which by now has assumed proportions so monstrous as to have become the grimdest menace that our race has ever had to face.

The point I am trying to make here is this: in order at all to be able to dispel this menace, we must never lose sight of the fact that what the superpowers are enacting is only a farce or, in Edward Thompson's phrase, a mere road show.¹

Besides, the fact that it has grown bigger and bigger to the point that both have lost all control of it clearly suggests that the key to genuine disarmament lies not in the 'talks' which the two coteries of nuclear thugs might ask their nominees to hold but in our refusal to continue to watch this farce any more. In other words, in the peace movement.

But, we must first see that this indeed is a farce. To this end, it seems necessary to refer to an extremely suggestive though not a very precise analogy that Robert Oppenheimer proposed way back in 1953. According to him, the United States and the Soviet Union were like two scorpions in a bottle, each capable of killing the other

1. E.P. Thompson. *Beyond the Cold War*, Merlin Press, London, 1982, p. 17.

but only at the risk of its own life.² But since each of them possesses immense stockpiles of extremely and indiscriminately destructive weapons, the two superpowers have by now become the most vicious and power-hungry scorpions that man has ever had to contend with. And, the most wily as well: for they feign bellicosity to conceal the fact that each of them actually needs the threat said to be posed by the other for purposes of domestic and bloc-internal legitimization.

But, a situation in which either can pretend to be threatened by the other and can thus expect to be able to enhance domestic credibility can only be maintained, if at all, by each side ensuring the other's basic integrity. Therefore, it could not possibly be in the interests of either to prepare to mount an attack on the other with a view to eliminating it altogether as a military power. For where, then, would the threat to its own existence be which it needs in order to exist at all and the bogey of which only the other can provide?

I am persuaded, therefore, that the two establishments have in effect entered into a state of conjugal concord which they would very much like to last for ever. I am not suggesting that what they have become parties to is a formal or even an informal agreement designed to keep each firmly entrenched in its own domain. What I am suggesting is that such arrangements as they have actually evolved over the years totally preclude even the desire or, rather, the need on either's part to go to war with the other. The reason simply is that the war constituencies in the two blocs, which also happen to be the dominant constituencies, must find the continuation of the tenuous peace of today to be an extremely lucrative business: contracts and cost overruns in the United States; perks, power, and extra fat salaries in the Soviet Union. They would not want such peace to terminate either in a nuclear holocaust or in peace proper.

2. J. Robert Oppenheimer, 'Atomic Weapons and Nuclear Policy'. *Foreign Affairs*, July 1953, p. 529.

The powers that be on either side would therefore have a definite objective need to create an external enemy. But, frequently, while the fact of this need as such is recognized, its objectivity is not. It may even be dismissed. On the American side, a recent example is a statement by George Kennan who is not so much of a dissident as a somewhat disturbed member of his country's establishment.

According to him, the intensified anti-Soviet hysteria of the late seventies and early eighties would be impossible to explain in essentially objective terms. In fact, even after long hours of poring over the bulletins of the London Institute for Strategic Studies, he remained unconvinced that 'the development of the Soviet conventional armed forces, particularly in the European theatre, was nearly as drastic or as frightening as was suggested by the bits of statistical information regularly leaked by the Pentagon to the American press.' Therefore, 'finding so little objective reason' for the 'professed fear of and hostility to the Soviet Union', he 'could only suspect that its origins were primarily subjective.'

This suggested to him 'something much more sinister than mere intellectual error, namely, a subconscious need on the part of a great many people for an external enemy — an enemy against whom frustrations could be vented, an enemy who could serve as a convenient target for the externalization of evil, an enemy in whose inhuman wickedness one could see the reflection of one's own exceptional virtue.' Little wonder that the politician, 'anxious to avoid involvement with the bitter internal issues of the day' such as inflation and 'the growing and uncontrollable crime and pervasive corruption and cynicism of every sort in our own country', and 'eager to reap, instead, the easy acclamations usually produced in our society by a vigorous ringing of the chauvinist bell,'³ took up the Soviet 'threat' in right earnest.

3. George Kennan, *The Nuclear Delusion*. Pantheon Books, New York, 1982, pp. xxii-xxiii.

But, his glossy eloquence notwithstanding, Kennan can be seen to have missed the real point. For, the objective basis of an hysteria internal to the United States ought not to be sought only in the Soviet Union, though it could well be there. But this is what Kennan seems to have done, and failing to see it there, he has decided to explain it as a purely subjective phenomenon. But the external enemy is primarily an objective need not of the ordinary people but of those who happen to be in power in each bloc and who stand to gain in the development, production and deployment of successive generations of weapons. It is for them to whip up mass hysteria so as to generate at the popular level a subjective need for an external enemy.

Nor is this a phenomenon exclusive to the twentieth century. Indeed, as Edward Thompson reminds us, the threat of an enemy, even recourse to war, has always afforded to uneasy rulers a means of internal ideological regulation and social discipline.⁴ The idea was quite familiar to William Shakespeare himself, and he made the dying Henry IV, who knew that the succession would be beset with problems, advise his son as follows:

*Therefore, my Harry,
Be it thy course to busy giddy
minds
With foreign quarrels...*

Accordingly, Henry V was led to Agincourt. Only, if he were to be persuaded to do such a thing today, the consequences could be calamitous in the extreme. He would be obliged to whip up hysteria, threaten to move towards the brink and also try to remain stalled if he ever moved too close to it.

In support of this view, one can do little better than to go to John Foster Dulles, a leading cold warrior of all time, and so notorious indeed that Albert Einstein himself was once forced to exclaim: 'This man Dulles is a real misfortune!'⁵ But as real a misfortune as he was, Dulles did make some statements which, taken together, help us see

4. E.P. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

5. Otto Nathan and Heinz Nordhoff, *Einstein on Peace*. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1960, p. 638.

a superpower's need for 'regulated hysteria': for going to the brink but, given the compulsions of the nuclear age, trying not to go over the brink. Thus, on one occasion, he said: 'In order to make the country bear the burden of arms expenditure, we have to create an emotional atmosphere akin to wartime psychology. We must create the idea of a threat from without.'⁶ But even then, he had to make sure that this bogey of a threat from without did not get exaggerated beyond control. Therefore, he felt obliged to affirm that: 'I do not know any responsible official, military or civilian, in this government or any government who believes that the Soviet Government now plans conquest by open military means.'⁷ I am not sure if these statements were made in this order or even in quick succession. But it seems reasonable to presume that Dulles held the two positions simultaneously. It also seems necessary to submit that Kennan's subjective need is, of course, the same thing as Dulles' 'emotional atmosphere'. But while Kennan simply presumes it to be there already, Dulles knew that it had to be created.

It follows that the present hysteria also is a purely artificial phenomenon. It had to be created on both sides, though no Russian counterpart of George Kennan would dare to or be allowed to say this, at least in public. Be that as it may, the decisions leading to the current acceleration of the arms buildups were made evidently during the 'detente' itself. They were not in response to any crisis but actually stimulated one. They would therefore need some plausible excuse which in turn would necessitate the creation of a subjective need for an external enemy. Each got this excuse in the increased tempo of the other's buildup.

This might have been a coincidence. But, new generations of weapons on either side, having taken years on the drawing boards

and in the laboratories, became ready for deployment in the late seventies. Excuses also had therefore to be manufactured. Thus, in 1977 when after years of development, the cruise missile became ready for introduction, its advocates managed to 'discover' a new Soviet weapon—a proton beam said to be able to destroy all conventional US ballistic missiles and aircraft but not this new low-flying contraption.⁸

It may well be that when the weapons now available have been deployed, though only after some horse-trading, the superpowers will decide to sanction another period of detente, though at a much higher level of nuclearization of the world. If the present is any guide, it will be followed by another crisis. For, then, weapons now being developed will have been perfected and will 'need' to be deployed. Such is the dire dialectic of the nuclear age that the establishments of the two super powers have no option but to go on producing weapons which they cannot and would not like to use. In the process, each has acquired the power to destroy the other many times over. But neither would like to use this power even if there were no risk whatsoever of self-destruction. But that risk is more of a certainty now.

However, since each is perfectly aware that it could inflict only unlimited damage on the other and also suffer similar damage in return, it seeks actively to ensure, as best it can, that the other's legitimacy at home and abroad remains largely undestroyed and, in fact, essentially unquestioned. Little wonder that as scorpions, the two have divided up the bottle or, rather, the world into more or less well-defined domains that each takes care to respect as inviolable.

It follows that at least in so far as the behaviour of the two superpowers with respect to each other is concerned, it cannot be explained in terms of what the exponents of the art of diplomacy in ancient India designated as *matsya-nyaya* or the fish-logic which entails that big

fish eat small fish.⁹ But, in so far as their behaviour with regard to their respective client States is concerned, they continue to be nothing but very large and voracious fishes. Each has in effect managed to swallow numerous smaller powers so as to create its own power bloc. But since neither can manage or even afford to swallow the other, they can no longer relate to each other as fishes would.

Indeed, the sheer quantum and the kind of power which becomes available and has to be accumulated in the nuclear age obliges each to seek self-preservation not in trying to swallow but in trying in effect to sustain the other. They have no option but to get metamorphosed into scorpions. I am not sure if two ordinary scorpions, caught in a bottle, would indeed behave like the superpowers: each pretending to threaten and yet needing the other. Some zoologist specializing in the psychology of scorpions perhaps would be able to enlighten us on this. But each superpower understood as a scorpion in Oppenheimer's sense must condone what the other has to do as a fish.

Thus, when in the late sixties the Soviet Union managed to crush dissent in Czechoslovakia and the United States succeeded in smothering the movement for freedom in Greece, each defended its own actions as bloc-defensive, and indirectly accused the other of expansionism. But, at the same time, both took care not to fall for their own propaganda. Rather, 'in a variety of ways they sanctioned each other's intervention.'¹⁰ Indeed, the two have mastered the art of regulating their relations in such a way that they can use them for purposes of controlling the rest of the world.

Evidently, in order to explain the behaviour of the two 'fishscorpions', we would do well to make a sharp distinction between the way they

6. Quoted in John Cox, *Overkill*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1981, p. 224.

7. Quoted in Mary Kaldor, *The Dis-integrating West*. Allen Lane, London, 1978, p. 17.

8. John Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

9. Heinrich Zimmer. *Philosophies of India*. Meridian Books, Cleveland, 1964, p. 119.

10. Andreas Papandreou, *Paternalistic Capitalism*. Oxford University Press, London, 1972, p. 134.

into friends and future comrades-in-arms. It so vitiated the international environment that notions of neutrality outside the bipolar bloc system were looked upon as morally reprehensible and militarily suicidal.

It was against this international background that decolonisation got under way. More than a hundred countries, which had been ruled by and tied to the European system, came to join the international community. The new nations were throbbing with aspirations to exercise the show and substance of independence. They looked forward to refashioning their own socio-economic domestic structures and determine their own pattern of functional international relations. The two processes of the cold war and decolonisation were inherently in conflict; one required conformity and was centrifugal and the other looked to diversity and was centripetal and divisive.

Decolonisation did not have to coincide with the cold war. The United States wrested its independence in the 18th century; the Spanish and Portuguese empires wound up in South America in the 19th century. India could have been given the substance of power before 1939. The world war hastened the decolonisation in Asia and Africa but, in the end, the process was inevitable. Imposed isolation and insulation had kept Asia and Africa outside the pale of international politics but, with modern communications, the urge for self-government could not but reach all the colonial dependencies.

The war brought defeat and occupation to France, the Netherlands and Belgium. Many of their colonies were overrun by the Axis powers. After the war the imperialist nostalgia tried to regain the old hold in Indo-China, the Dutch East Indies and Algeria but the attempts only invited frustration and failure. Britain was not defeated but was enfeebled by its exertions. In any case, the illusion of permanence and invincibility of European hegemony was shattered by the war and the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the two world powers.

The process of decolonisation, let it be added, was not precipitated by the advent of communism, or the establishment of socialism in the Soviet Union or even the constitution of the communist bloc. The USSR banked on proletarian internationalism and, at least initially, thought decolonisation was a charade and the new nations were not necessarily free to develop meaningful relations with the socialist system.

Though the decisions arose from independent processes, 1947 was the critical year both for the advent of the cold war and the beginning of post war decolonisation. Britain under a Labour Government started the process of decolonisation by the transfer of power to India and its Asian colonies. The Truman doctrine of global containment of communism and the transfer of power (and partition) in the subcontinent happened to synchronise but their interaction and international consequences were not perceived at the time.

Non-alignment was born in defiance of the global bipolarity which started with the policies of containment. The cold war beleaguered the new countries in the wake of their independence. Their nationalism irked at the demand for conformity. They refused to accept an 'either' 'or' choice of socio-economic systems. Nor were they prepared to accept that a military alliance with one or the other of the contending blocs was the only guarantee for preserving national independence.

The earliest definition of non-alignment, no doubt vague but none-the-less incisive, is found in the writings and speeches of Nehru, enunciated even before he became head of the government of independent India. In his first broadcast as Vice President of the interim government in September 1946, Nehru had said: 'We propose as far as possible to keep away from power policies of groups, aligned against one-another which in the past have led to world wars and which may lead to disaster, even on a bigger scale in the future.' Nehru's ap-

proach is the more significant as his pronouncement against joining alliances was made even before the war-time allies and adversaries had regrouped into military blocs.

The elements of what constitutes non-alignment have never been embodied in a clear Charter of Principles. In fact, non-alignment has been defined in different ways by the same country at different times to fit in conveniently with its prevailing national policies and circumstances. (Contrast Indonesia's attitude under Sukarno with that of Suharto; Ethiopia's approach under the Emperor Haile Selassi and now under Mengitsu). However, the essential core and consensus of non-aligned principles can be extrapolated and distilled, and broadly defined.

(i) Non-alignment implicitly stood for a plurality and democratic equality within the international community. It affirmed a faith in self-determination and the total end of colonialism. It followed that it opposed all forms of pressures and outside interventions in the internal politics of a nation. While opposed to disciplined bloc conformity, non-alignment predicated on the freedom, indeed imperative of international cooperation and beneficial functional relationships in an increasingly interdependent world.

(ii) Non-alignment, in its essential thrust, stood for all fundamental human rights. More particularly, it challenged racialism and apartheid. It also supported the right for individual political liberties and the demand for economic and social justice.

(iii) Non-alignment which asserted ideological agnosticism in determining international relationships also stood for freedom of nations democratically to determine their internal socio-political philosophies. It did not reject the validity of different and opposing socio-economic concepts but denied the right of imposition of an external ideology or system. In effect, it argued that a nation must have the right to evolve from its own civilizational roots and economic circumstances. Any or all ideologies

could compete in the national political arena but they had to be grounded in the soil of the country.

(iv) Non-alignment was based on the premise that national security — internal and external — was a function of the totality of national strength. In effect, this implied that neither morally nor pragmatically should internal legitimacy be based solely on military power. Even less was it prudent to surrender to outside protection. The key to national modernisation and security was development and social justice.

(v) Non-alignment asserted that for the fulfilment of national aspirations and the exercise of sovereign independence, international peace was an overriding precondition. Non-alignment, therefore, pleaded for peaceful coexistence and the avoidance of such confrontation which would lead to international conflicts. This was all the more vital in the face of weapons of mass destruction and the moral and military implication of nuclear war. With unprecedented dangers from international conflicts, specially between the great powers, the non-aligned placed emphasis on the peaceful resolution of all disputes.

Put together, the axioms of non-alignment were independence, development and peaceful coexistence in an interdependent world. These principles predicated international interdependence, which was a protest against any form of globalism, militaristic, economic, ideological or political. It was a plea for a balance between pluralistic internationalism and the persisting reality of nationalism in the system of nation States. These principles, it may be repeated, were never formulated in this form but there was an implicit broad consensus around them amongst the early mentors of the movement.

The non-aligned approach was initially advanced during what was perceived as the most serious crisis in world history. Dean Acheson when urging the adoption of the Truman doctrine had declared that never since Rome faced Carthage was the world confronted with such a division and challenge. John Foster

Dulles, as we know, denounced notions of neutrality as immoral. It required the fire of deep conviction to challenge the prevailing counsels of the powerful nations of the world.

Initially, India was almost alone or, at least, the most defiant against the conventional wisdom which emanated from the great powers. India was in the lead and persisted for decades to urge that the UN should be a universal non-ideological organisation of States and so communist China should be admitted to its membership. India transmitted the warning to the western powers against enlarging the Korean War by US troops advancing north of the 38th parallel. It played a key, behind-the-scene, role in the Geneva conference on the Indo-China States (1954). Yugoslavia was a pioneer when it broke away from Stalin's Russia against ideological conformity in the Socialist Commonwealth. The refusal of Egypt under Nasser to be cowed down by the summary withdrawal of promised aid for the Aswan Dam was the first assertion against economic aid being politically conditioned. Egypt survived the conspiratorial aggression by U.K., France and Israel to re-establish control over the Suez Canal region. However, while Yugoslavia and Egypt had shown the courage of defiance against great powers, they did so only on national problems. India's role was on non-national problems affecting world peace.

India can, therefore, legitimately claim some credit for asserting the kind of independent judgement which gave courage and appeal to non-alignment. There was then no multilateral strength to back the approach in the fifties. The moral standing of India's non-aligned stand itself was admittedly diluted when India shirked from raising its voice against intervention at the time of the Hungarian crisis in 1956. However, the point to notice is that the non-aligned approach achieved its teething colours — indeed, its notable successes — on major international problems when the aligned blocs were both strong and intolerant of any dissent and no collective forum of the non-align-

ned had emerged. One could almost go so far as to assert that the greatest glory and achievement of the non-aligned approach was before the non-aligned movement was founded.

By the end of the fifties, the process of decolonization was well under way. The important colonies in Asia became independent in the forties (India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia). Most but not all of them even initially were inclined to adopt non-alignment as their foreign policy. By 1960, the winds of change were blowing across Africa and Britain; France and Belgium were in the process of transferring the substance of political power to their respective colonies in the continent. The OAU formed in 1960, in its charter, inscribed a commitment to non-alignment as part of its founding declaration. Since then non-alignment has swept the international checker board.

At the last non-aligned summit held in Havana the membership of the non-aligned movement had reached 95 without counting observers and guests. Country after country had made it plain that they prized their national independence through detachment from the two major alliance systems. Many countries which initially chose to belong to the blocs have since repudiated their commitments and turned to join the fraternity of the non-aligned nations. Iraq renounced the membership of the Baghdad Pact after its revolution and Iran did so after the fall of the Shah. Pakistan finally applied to join the non-aligned in the late seventies.

What is more significant is that countries which are still tied militarily to the blocs are showing the kind of independence from the superpowers' leadership which is associated with the approach of non-alignment. France and Rumania, even in the sixties, started asserting that their national interests did not fully coincide with the discipline implicit in the collective foreign policy approach of their respective blocs.

Looking back on these three decades, the approach of non-align-

ment — of independence and co-existence rather than a disciplined conformity and preparation for an inevitable war — has been prophetically vindicated. The old bipolarity is dead; the international system has got polycentralised. The rationale of total iron curtain adversary relations between different socio-economic systems is all but repudiated. The possibility of a major conventional or nuclear conflict is not now considered unavoidable. After the defections of Yugoslavia and the Sino-Soviet split, ideology has ceased to be considered a cementing force for political relationships. Even where the same ideology is professed, as in the Soviet bloc, the socio-economic policies are being nationally domesticated.

The quest for alliance relationships has indeed led to curious aberrations and contradictions. The United States rejoiced in the independence of Communist Yugoslavia and has found itself buttressing military, fascist and blatantly undemocratic regimes. The USSR bloc and the communist countries have all too often befriended countries which outlawed communism at home.

The great achievement of non-alignment was to have anticipated and contributed to the restoration of the traditional sovereign discretion to independent nations. Given internal strength, nations can, once again, more or less, fearlessly determine their relations with each other on the basis of their perceived political, economic and security interests. Left to themselves, most countries now recoil from peacetime military commitments outside their own direct security concerns. At all events, they reject the notion that the threat to one country must be automatically perceived as a threat to all nations. Nationalism against imperialism, peace and co-existence against confrontation and conflict are no longer questioned as morally reprehensible or defensively suicidal. In brief, today non-alignment is no longer at bay. It is the United States and its allies and the USSR and its voluntary or involun-

tary followers who find themselves in a minority and often 'in opposition' in international councils. If anything, the criticism now is that the countries which profess to be non-aligned do not act according to their principles.

And yet, despite the vindication of the non-aligned philosophy and the growing well-nigh universal appeal of its principles, the non-aligned movement is transparently in disarray—enfeebled from within and, notwithstanding verbal homages and ulterior purposes, disregarded from without.

It is worth reviewing how this paradoxical degeneration came about. The struggle between original principles and the obsessive search for demonstrable unity was evident throughout as non-alignment went on from one gathering to the next. It became more difficult as numbers grew and activist delegations, overlooking the essential spirit of non-alignment, sought to bend the consensus of the movement to their own national perspectives. The movement, as a whole, did not see how non-alignment was slowly but steadily departing from its spirit of safeguarding dissent and diversity in the international system. Unwittingly, it was being reduced to flattering the philosophy of the aligned—of multilateral conformity and subordinating inherent differences of national interests.

The spirit of non-alignment came out best at the Bandung conference in 1955, which was not a meeting of the non-aligned at all even though it was restricted to the countries of Asia and Africa. The deliberations saw a debate between the concept of peaceful coexistence between different social systems and the notion of security through external military dependence and the perceived threat of communist expansionism. The majority came out on the side of detachment from the cold war confrontation.

But, it was more than a negative affirmation against conformity. Even with Chou En-Lai there, representing Communist China, the declaration demanded the catholic right of new countries to choose

their economic partners according to their own discretion and needs. It called on the International Bank for Reconstruction — The World Bank—to provide assistance to the developing countries according to their developmental needs. Bandung was the first summit level meeting of the leaders of Africa and Asia and was thus historic in symbolising the end of European domination of international diplomacy.

By 1961, when the 25 nations met in Belgrade at the first Non-aligned Conference, peaceful co-existence had ceased to be morally retrograde or politically reprehensible. Racism persisted in South Africa; but only Portugal was vaunting justification for its colonies. The French were on the way to withdrawing from Algeria. Only in Vietnam was the fulfilment of nationalism being resisted and this was the legacy of the cold war syndrome of the fifties. Meanwhile, following the launching of the Sputnik and the Soviet Union mastering the technique of making a thermo-nuclear bomb, there was a growing recognition of the dangers of the nuclear arms race and the threat from continuing atmospheric explosions.

In Belgrade itself there was a conflict between two views on international priorities; whether to focus on peace, disarmament, co-existence and positive cooperation across the ideological divide or continue confrontation with the old imperialism of which the USA was then seen as a latter day leader and protector. Sukarno became the spokesman for the confrontationist lobby while Nehru advanced his vision for peace and co-operation and the dangers of nuclear war and testing, and urged positive enlightened internationalism to make the world 'safe' for diversity and independence. The Belgrade declaration was a compromise document but has remained the point of reference on principles, priorities and qualifications for membership of the movement. The Conference was on guard against institutionalising an anti-bloc bloc and never even considered holding a subsequent summit.

The second summit of the Non-aligned in Cairo held in 1964 was

called really to pre-empt the proposal to hold a second Bandung. The confrontationist concept had, in the meanwhile, gathered momentum, specially following the Sino-Soviet rift. China had launched on its call for revolution and solidarity of the Third World against the 'cities of the world', which included both the western bloc and Soviet led eastern Europe.

The Sino-Indian dispute, which had erupted in 1959 had culminated in a short but massive war in 1962, and cast its shadow on non-aligned cohesion. It was a clear case of the use of force against an established or, at least, an openly-claimed frontier. The interim mediatory proposals by Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and other non-aligned countries in 1962-63 had failed as China rejected the proposal for withdrawal to create a non-administered no man's land even from the territory overrun during the 1962 conflict. It was the first major challenge on whether the non-aligned, as a movement, were going to face squarely the problems of the use of force which affected one of their members. As we know, the conference evaded the India China issue. This has been the bane of the movement ever since -- that intra-Third World problems, when they could not be attributed to western imperialism, were to be played down in the quest for a consensus and unity.

The holding of the Cairo Conference, before the second Bandung, did, however, enable the non-aligned to survive as a movement. Had the second Afro-Asian conference been held before the Cairo Conference, it might have gone on to hold a tri-continental conference, then proposed to be hosted by Cuba. Since Belgrade, Sino-Soviet competition had overtaken even the East/West confrontation as the major dilemma before the Third World. Specifically, the difference in approach was on whether or not the USSR was to be accepted as an Asian power but in its true significance it was whether non-alignment was to be on the side of peace, detente, cooperation with different blocs or take sides with China in the confrontation approach to international politics.

The second Afro-Asian conference was originally scheduled to take place in Algiers in April 1965; it was postponed at the last minute because of the fall of Ben Bella. By November 1965, when it assembled, Sukarno had also been displaced. When, at the pre-conference meeting, it appeared that the broad majority was not in favour of keeping the USSR out, the conference itself was abandoned and the idea of another Bandung has never since been seriously revived. It illustrated and highlighted the trend of wanting to use multilateral forums to subserve the particular goal of some powers, rather than constructive endeavour to support peace and resolve serious international problems.

Even after the Cairo Conference, no decision had been taken on the holding of a third summit of the non-aligned. It was held after a gap of six years in Lusaka in 1970. While rejecting any formal commitment to institutionalise the movement, it was decided there that a non-aligned summit would take place every three years. The membership of the movement had already increased to 54. Unconsciously, the trend was to imitate the practices and procedures of the established international institutions like the UN. Aside from the declarations, 14 separate resolutions were passed at the conference mostly pertaining to Africa and racialism but also to Vietnam and East/West issues.

The fourth Non-aligned Summit was notable as Algeria, the host country, showed great determination in exercising its leadership over the movement. It proposed and secured the creation of a Bureau for inter-summit coordination under the chairmanship of the host country. The Algiers declaration in keeping with Algeria's own radical approach veered away significantly from neutrality between blocs. The consensus which emerged even after the amendments, carried the stamp of the host authors. The outward show of unity and solidarity in the movement was so compulsive that a declaration was allowed to go through even though it was at variance with the internal and

external policies of a vast number attending the meeting.

Incidentally, before the fourth summit, OPEC had already come into existence. The oil weapon was projected as a telling leverage against the West and its continuing neo-colonialist hold over the former colonies, with the multi-national corporations acting as the instruments of such exploitation. The Third World, as a whole, vaguely hoped that the oil weapon could be used not just to get an equitable price for the exporters of a depleting resource but for parallel advantages for the commodity exports of the other developing countries with mono-economic cultures. The Algiers Conference endorsed the right to use raw material as a weapon for confrontation with the affluent world, but shirked from contemplating the foreseeable consequences of oil price hikes on fraternal members of the movement.

The fifth conference in Colombo (1976) corrected the balance somewhat against the radical twist given at Algiers. However, the trend to overlap and duplicate the United Nations agenda became even more pronounced. In the wake of the energy crisis, there was great elaboration of the economic problems in the developing world but, in deference to OPEC members, the serious concern of the non-aligned oil importers was not allowed to be raised and embodied in the recommendations.

The Colombo Conference was also memorable for the gargantuan diplomatic efforts of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (with several hundred strong delegation, most of whom had to stay on board a ship berthed in Colombo harbour) to obtain non-aligned backing for its own position on the reunification of the two Koreas. It was symptomatic of the effort to use non-alignment for purely national interests even though it ended in failure. In contrast, the presence of the delegation led by Premier Pham-Van-Dong of Vietnam, after having defeated the mighty United States, vindicated the validity and strength of nationalism. The Vietnam delegation commanded immense respect by refraining from victory polemics

into friends and future comrades-in-arms. It so vitiated the international environment that notions of neutrality outside the bipolar bloc system were looked upon as morally reprehensible and militarily suicidal.

It was against this international background that decolonisation got under way. More than a hundred countries, which had been ruled by and tied to the European system, came to join the international community. The new nations were throbbing with aspirations to exercise the show and substance of independence. They looked forward to refashioning their own socio-economic domestic structures and determine their own pattern of functional international relations. The two processes of the cold war and decolonisation were inherently in conflict; one required conformity and was centrifugal and the other looked to diversity and was centripetal and divisive.

Decolonisation did not have to coincide with the cold war. The United States wrested its independence in the 18th century; the Spanish and Portuguese empires wound up in South America in the 19th century. India could have been given the substance of power before 1939. The world war hastened the decolonisation in Asia and Africa but, in the end, the process was inevitable. Imposed isolation and insulation had kept Asia and Africa outside the pale of international politics but, with modern communications, the urge for self-government could not but reach all the colonial dependencies.

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Though the decisions arose from independent processes, 1947 was the critical year both for the advent of the cold war and the beginning of post war decolonisation. Britain under a Labour Government started the process of decolonisation by the transfer of power to India and its Asian colonies. The Truman doctrine of global containment of communism and the transfer of power (and partition) in the subcontinent happened to synchronise but their interaction and international consequences were not perceived at the time.

Non-alignment was born in defiance of the global bipolarity which started with the policies of containment. The cold war beleaguered the new countries in the wake of their independence. Their nationalism irked at the demand for conformity. They refused to accept an 'either' 'or' choice of socio-economic systems. Nor were they prepared to accept that a military alliance with one or the other of the contending blocs was the only guarantee for preserving national independence.

The earliest definition of non-alignment, no doubt vague but none-the-less incisive, is found in the writings and speeches of Nehru, enunciated even before he became head of the government of independent India. In his first broadcast as Vice President of the interim government in September 1946, Nehru had said: 'We propose as far as possible to keep away from power policies of groups, aligned against one another which in the past have led to world wars and which may lead to disaster, even on a bigger scale in the future.' Nehru's approach

is the more significant as his pronouncement against joining alliances was made even before the war-time allies and adversaries had regrouped into military blocs.

The elements of what constitutes non-alignment have never been embodied in a clear Charter of Principles. In fact, non-alignment has been defined in different ways by the same country at different times to fit in conveniently with its prevailing national policies and circumstances. (Contrast Indonesia's attitude under Sukarno with that of Suharto; Ethiopia's approach under the Emperor Haile Selassi and now under Mengitsu). However, the essential core and consensus of non-aligned principles can be extrapolated and distilled, and broadly defined.

(i) Non-alignment implicitly stood for a plurality and democratic equality within the international community. It affirmed a faith in self-determination and the total end of colonialism. It followed that it opposed all forms of pressures and outside interventions in the internal politics of a nation. While opposed to disciplined bloc conformity, non-alignment predicated on the freedom, indeed imperative of international cooperation and beneficial functional relationships in an increasingly interdependent world.

(ii) Non-alignment, in its essential thrust, stood for all fundamental human rights. More particularly, it challenged racialism and apartheid. It also supported the right for individual political liberties and the demand for economic and social justice.

(iii) Non-alignment which asserted ideological agnosticism in determining international relationships also stood for freedom of nations democratically to determine their internal socio-political philosophies. It did not reject the validity of different and opposing socio-economic concepts but denied the right of imposition of an external ideology or system. In effect, it argued that a nation must have the right to evolve from its own civilizational roots and economic circumstances. Any or all ideologies

could compete in the national political arena but they had to be grounded in the soil of the country.

(iv) Non-alignment was based on the premise that national security — internal and external — was a function of the totality of national strength. In effect, this implied that neither morally nor pragmatically should internal legitimacy be based solely on military power. Even less was it prudent to surrender to outside protection. The key to national modernisation and security was development and social justice.

(v) Non-alignment asserted that for the fulfilment of national aspirations and the exercise of sovereign independence, international peace was an overriding precondition. Non-alignment, therefore, pleaded for peaceful coexistence and the avoidance of such confrontation which would lead to international conflicts. This was all the more vital in the face of weapons of mass destruction and the moral and military implication of nuclear war. With unprecedented dangers from international conflicts, specially between the great powers, the non-aligned placed emphasis on the peaceful resolution of all disputes.

Put together, the axioms of non-alignment were independence, development and peaceful coexistence in an interdependent world. These principles predicated international interdependence, which was a protest against any form of globalism, militaristic, economic, ideological or political. It was a plea for a balance between pluralistic internationalism and the persisting reality of nationalism in the system of nation States. These principles, it may be repeated, were never formulated in this form but there was an implicit broad consensus around them amongst the early mentors of the movement.

The non-aligned approach was initially advanced during what was perceived as the most serious crisis in world history. Dean Acheson when urging the adoption of the Truman doctrine had declared that never since Rome faced Carthage was the world confronted with such a division and challenge. John Foster

Dulles, as we know, denounced notions of neutrality as immoral. It required the fire of deep conviction to challenge the prevailing counsels of the powerful nations of the world.

Initially, India was almost alone or, at least, the most defiant against the conventional wisdom which emanated from the great powers. India was in the lead and persisted for decades to urge that the UN should be a universal non-ideological organisation of States and so communist China should be admitted to its membership. India transmitted the warning to the western powers against enlarging the Korean War by US troops advancing north of the 38th parallel. It played a key, behind-the-scene, role in the Geneva conference on the Indo-China States (1954). Yugoslavia was a pioneer when it broke away from Stalin's Russia against ideological conformity in the Socialist Commonwealth. The refusal of Egypt under Nasser to be cowed down by the summary withdrawal of promised aid for the Aswan Dam was the first assertion against economic aid being politically conditioned. Egypt survived the conspiratorial aggression by U.K., France and Israel to re-establish control over the Suez Canal region. However, while Yugoslavia and Egypt had shown the courage of defiance against great powers, they did so only on national problems. India's role was on non-national problems affecting world peace.

India can, therefore, legitimately claim some credit for asserting the kind of independent judgement which gave courage and appeal to non-alignment. There was then no multilateral strength to back the approach in the fifties. The moral standing of India's non-aligned stand itself was admittedly diluted when India shirked from raising its voice against intervention at the time of the Hungarian crisis in 1956. However, the point to notice is that the non-aligned approach achieved its teething colours — indeed, its notable successes — on major international problems when the aligned blocs were both strong and intolerant of any dissent and no collective forum of the non-align-

ned had emerged. One could almost go so far as to assert that the greatest glory and achievement of the non-aligned approach was before the non-aligned movement was founded.

By the end of the fifties, the process of decolonization was well under way. The important colonies in Asia became independent in the forties (India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia). Most but not all of them even initially were inclined to adopt non-alignment as their foreign policy. By 1960, the winds of change were blowing across Africa and Britain; France and Belgium were in the process of transferring the substance of political power to their respective colonies in the continent. The OAU formed in 1960, in its charter, inscribed a commitment to non-alignment as part of its founding declaration. Since then non-alignment has swept the international checker board.

At the last non-aligned summit held in Havana the membership of the non-aligned movement had reached 95 without counting observers and guests. Country after country had made it plain that they prized their national independence through detachment from the two major alliance systems. Many countries which initially chose to belong to the blocs have since repudiated their commitments and turned to join the fraternity of the non-aligned nations. Iraq renounced the membership of the Baghdad Pact after its revolution and Iran did so after the fall of the Shah. Pakistan finally applied to join the non-aligned in the late seventies.

What is more significant is that countries which are still tied militarily to the blocs are showing the kind of independence from the superpowers' leadership which is associated with the approach of non-alignment. France and Rumania, even in the sixties, started asserting that their national interests did not fully coincide with the discipline implicit in the collective foreign policy approach of their respective blocs.

Looking back on these three decades, the approach of non-align-

ment — of independence and co-existence rather than a disciplined conformity and preparation for an inevitable war — has been prophetically vindicated. The old bipolarity is dead; the international system has got polycentralised. The rationale of total iron curtain adversary relations between different socio-economic systems is all but repudiated. The possibility of a major conventional or nuclear conflict is not now considered unavoidable. After the defections of Yugoslavia and the Sino-Soviet split, ideology has ceased to be considered a cementing force for political relationships. Even where the same ideology is professed, as in the Soviet bloc, the socio-economic policies are being nationally domesticated.

The quest for alliance relationships has indeed led to curious aberrations and contradictions. The United States rejoiced in the independence of Communist Yugoslavia and has found itself buttressing military, fascist and blatantly undemocratic regimes. The USSR bloc and the communist countries have all too often befriended countries which outlawed communism at home.

The great achievement of non-alignment was to have anticipated and contributed to the restoration of the traditional sovereign discretion to independent nations. Given internal strength, nations can, once again, more or less, fearlessly determine their relations with each other on the basis of their perceived political, economic and security interests. Left to themselves, most countries now recoil from peacetime military commitments outside their own direct security concerns. At all events, they reject the notion that the threat to one country must be automatically perceived as a threat to all nations. Nationalism against imperialism, peace and co-existence against confrontation and conflict are no longer questioned as morally reprehensible or defensively suicidal. In brief, today non-alignment is no longer at bay. It is the United States and its allies and the USSR and its voluntary or involun-

tary followers who find themselves in a minority and often 'in opposition' in international councils. If anything, the criticism now is that the countries which profess to be non-aligned do not act according to their principles.

And yet, despite the vindication of the non-aligned philosophy and the growing well-nigh universal appeal of its principles, the non-aligned movement is transparently in disarray—enfeebled from within and, notwithstanding verbal homages and ulterior purposes, disregarded from without:

It is worth reviewing how this paradoxical degeneration came about. The struggle between original principles and the obsessive search for demonstrable unity was evident throughout as non-alignment went on from one gathering to the next. It became more difficult as numbers grew and activist delegations, overlooking the essential spirit of non-alignment, sought to bend the consensus of the movement to their own national perspectives. The movement, as a whole, did not see how non-alignment was slowly but steadily departing from its spirit of safeguarding dissent and diversity in the international system. Unwittingly, it was being reduced to flattering the philosophy of the aligned—of multilateral conformity and subordinating inherent differences of national interests.

The spirit of non-alignment came out best at the Bandung conference in 1955, which was not a meeting of the non-aligned at all even though it was restricted to the countries of Asia and Africa. The deliberations saw a debate between the concept of peaceful coexistence between different social systems and the notion of security through external military dependence and the perceived threat of communist expansionism. The majority came out on the side of detachment from the cold war confrontation.

But, it was more than a negative affirmation against conformity. Even with Chou En-Lai there, representing Communist China, the declaration demanded the catholic right of new countries to choose

their economic partners according to their own discretion and needs. It called on the International Bank for Reconstruction — The World Bank—to provide assistance to the developing countries according to their developmental needs. Bandung was the first summit level meeting of the leaders of Africa and Asia and was thus historic in symbolising the end of European domination of international diplomacy.

By 1961, when the 25 nations met in Belgrade at the first Non-aligned Conference, peaceful co-existence had ceased to be morally retrograde or politically reprehensible. Racism persisted in South Africa; but only Portugal was vaunting justification for its colonies. The French were on the way to withdrawing from Algeria. Only in Vietnam was the fulfilment of nationalism being resisted and this was the legacy of the cold war syndrome of the fifties. Meanwhile, following the launching of the Sputnik and the Soviet Union mastering the technique of making a thermo-nuclear bomb, there was a growing recognition of the dangers of the nuclear arms race and the threat from continuing atmospheric explosions.

In Belgrade itself there was a conflict between two views on international priorities; whether to focus on peace, disarmament, co-existence and positive cooperation across the ideological divide or continue confrontation with the old imperialism of which the USA was then seen as a latter day leader and protector. Sukarno became the spokesman for the confrontationist lobby while Nehru advanced his vision for peace and co-operation and the dangers of nuclear war and testing, and urged positive enlightened internationalism to make the world safe for diversity and independence. The Belgrade declaration was a compromise document but has remained the point of reference on principles, priorities and qualifications for membership of the movement. The Conference was on guard against institutionalising an anti-bloc bloc and never even considered holding a subsequent summit.

The second summit of the Non-aligned in Cairo held in 1964 was

called really to pre-empt the proposal to hold a second Bandung. The confrontationist concept had, in the meanwhile, gathered momentum, specially following the Sino-Soviet rift. China had launched on its call for revolution and solidarity of the Third World against the 'cities of the world', which included both the western bloc and Soviet led eastern Europe.

The Sino-Indian dispute, which had erupted in 1959 had culminated in a short but massive war in 1962, and cast its shadow on non-aligned cohesion. It was a clear case of the use of force against an established or, at least, an openly-claimed frontier. The interim mediatory proposals by Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and other non-aligned countries in 1962-63 had failed as China rejected the proposal for withdrawal to create a non-administered no man's land even from the territory overrun during the 1962 conflict. It was the first major challenge on whether the non-aligned, as a movement, were going to face squarely the problems of the use of force which affected one of their members. As we know, the conference evaded the India China issue. This has been the bane of the movement ever since -- that intra-Third World problems, when they could not be attributed to western imperialism, were to be played down in the quest for a consensus and unity.

The holding of the Cairo Conference, before the second Bandung, did, however, enable the non-aligned to survive as a movement. Had the second Afro-Asian conference been held before the Cairo Conference, it might have gone on to hold a tri-continental conference, then proposed to be hosted by Cuba. Since Belgrade, Sino-Soviet competition had overtaken even the East/West confrontation as the major dilemma before the Third World. Specifically, the difference in approach was on whether or not the USSR was to be accepted as an Asian power but in its true significance it was whether non-alignment was to be on the side of peace, detente, cooperation with different blocs or take sides with China in the confrontation approach to international politics.

The second Afro-Asian conference was originally scheduled to take place in Algiers in April 1965; it was postponed at the last minute because of the fall of Ben Bella. By November 1965, when it assembled, Sukarno had also been displaced. When, at the pre-conference meeting, it appeared that the broad majority was not in favour of keeping the USSR out, the conference itself was abandoned and the idea of another Bandung has never since been seriously revived. It illustrated and highlighted the trend of wanting to use multilateral forums to subserve the particular goal of some powers, rather than constructive endeavour to support peace and resolve serious international problems.

Even after the Cairo Conference, no decision had been taken on the holding of a third summit of the non-aligned. It was held after a gap of six years in Lusaka in 1970. While rejecting any formal commitment to institutionalise the movement, it was decided there that a non-aligned summit would take place every three years. The membership of the movement had already increased to 54. Unconsciously, the trend was to imitate the practices and procedures of the established international institutions like the UN. Aside from the declarations, 14 separate resolutions were passed at the conference mostly pertaining to Africa and racialism but also to Vietnam and East/West issues.

The fourth Non-aligned Summit was notable as Algeria, the host country, showed great determination in exercising its leadership over the movement. It proposed and secured the creation of a Bureau for inter-summit coordination under the chairmanship of the host country. The Algiers declaration in keeping with Algeria's own radical approach veered away significantly from neutrality between blocs. The consensus which emerged even after the amendments, carried the stamp of the host authors. The outward show of unity and solidarity in the movement was so compulsive that a declaration was allowed to go through even though it was at variance with the internal and

external policies of a vast number attending the meeting.

Incidentally, before the fourth summit, OPEC had already come into existence. The oil weapon was projected as a telling leverage against the West and its continuing neo-colonialist hold over the former colonies, with the multi-national corporations acting as the instruments of such exploitation. The Third World, as a whole, vaguely hoped that the oil weapon could be used not just to get an equitable price for the exporters of a depleting resource but for parallel advantages for the commodity exports of the other developing countries with mono-economic cultures. The Algiers Conference endorsed the right to use raw material as a weapon for confrontation with the affluent world, but shirked from contemplating the foreseeable consequences of oil price hikes on fraternal members of the movement.

The fifth conference in Colombo (1976) corrected the balance somewhat against the radical twist given at Algiers. However, the trend to overlap and duplicate the United Nations agenda became even more pronounced. In the wake of the energy crisis, there was great elaboration of the economic problems in the developing world but, in deference to OPEC members, the serious concern of the non-aligned oil importers was not allowed to be raised and embodied in the recommendations.

The Colombo Conference was also memorable for the gargantuan diplomatic efforts of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (with several hundred strong delegation, most of whom had to stay on board a ship berthed in Colombo harbour) to obtain non-aligned backing for its own position on the reunification of the two Koreas. It was symptomatic of the effort to use non-alignment for purely national interests even though it ended in failure. In contrast, the presence of the delegation led by Premier Pham-Van-Dong of Vietnam, after having defeated the mighty United States, vindicated the validity and strength of nationalism. The Vietnam delegation commanded immense respect by refraining from victory polemics

or ulterior manoeuvres; it won a seat on the non-aligned bureau with ease.

The sixth summit conference in Havana in 1979 saw the revival of the sharp debate between the moderate, hitherto quiescent majority, and the radical active confrontationists, on the purpose and direction of the movement. Cuba sought to give non-alignment a slant which was in keeping with its own national perspectives and policies. Castro had no hesitation in denouncing Yankee imperialism and its old and new allies. (The most important new ally was, of course, China, which up to 1965 had been a firm friend of Cuba). Castro did not conceal that he saw the Socialist bloc, led by the USSR, as the natural ally of the non-aligned movement.

Using the administrative advantage of being the host-country, Cuba sought to exclude the delegation of the POL Pot regime in Kampuchea, which had represented the country at the previous conferences and still held the Kampuchean seat in the United Nations. The other issue which cast its shadow on the conference was whether Sadaat's Egypt, having recognised and compromised with Israel, should be condemned by the movement as a whole.

The important question which surfaced was whether the non-aligned movement was to function democratically or be slanted to reflect the views of an activist host. President Tito's call to the conference to remain the conscience of humankind and refrain from a partisan twist was generally acclaimed but the spirit of the conference was far removed from that concept. Burma highlighted the problem when, even though an original member and loyal in letter and spirit to its policies, it withdrew after calling for a faithful adherence to non-aligned principles. In fact, the meeting ended with a feeling of impending crisis rather than unity.

The serious division in the movement got highlighted when, three months later, the USSR intervened in Afghanistan. As Cuba's own position was at variance with that

of the majority, the movement as a whole refrained from taking any initiative. As a consequence, the Cuban Chairmanship, and indeed the movement as a whole remained virtually paralysed during the next three years. The crisis was once again dramatised when the venue of the next summit, under preparation for years at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, had to be shifted from Baghdad to Delhi. The proposed host was found to be involved in a long-lasting conflict with Iran, another non-aligned country. Each was accusing the other of territorial aggression, violation of human rights, unjustified intervention and outrage against the principles of non-alignment. The mediatory effort of the non-aligned proved infructuous and, in the process, the movement itself suffered serious loss of credibility and transparent embarrassment.

At the Delhi Summit, the membership crossed the 100 mark. It was a most impressive organisational feat, particularly as it was done at only a few months notice. The professional competence of our officials was once again demonstrated. Mrs Gandhi's stewardship commanded universal admiration and the threat of the movement becoming ideologically tilted was laid to rest. Her leadership prevailed against actual disruption by controversial issues like the representation of Kampuchea. But the problems of Kampuchea and Afghanistan remain and it may well be that when the General Assembly meets, a majority of the non-aligned will repudiate the Delhi consensus. Since the conference, or as a result of it, none of the ongoing problems have been resolved or even eased on the basis of the appeal of the heads of governments. The Iraq-Iran conflict has continued with the familiar ferocity and unreason. Indeed, the two have refused to cooperate even to tackle the oil stick in the Gulf which could spell disaster to them and affect all the nations bordering that almost enclosed, critically important, international sea.

In Kampuchea, since the conference, the conflict nearly spread to Thailand and in Afghanistan the 'insurgency' has intensified. There is

little prospect of agreement on a conference to restructure the international monetary system. By asking for universal participation, the declaration may embarrass the USSR and provide an excuse for the western nations for continued indifference. The prospect of global negotiations, a meaningful launching of a Common Fund to stabilise commodity prices, support for the universal committee for International Development Strategy are old recommendations bedevilled by old and familiar resistance. What is welcome in the declaration is its programme for greater focus on South/South cooperation and its call for self-reliance and regional and intra-regional cooperation.

The Delhi declaration in fact has two contradictory strands running through it which illustrate the problem of the near universalisation of the movement. On the one hand, aside from old issues like Israeli aggression and expansionism, Namibia, apartheid, there is a kind of new globalism — anti superpower, anti-imperialism, anti-racism and for a new global economic order. But this avoids issues born out of the differences, temporary or permanent, which involve the non-aligned themselves. On the other hand but much less strident, is the call for disciplined development and cooperation at the national and regional level and implicit recognition that diversity in the international system cannot be overcome by global prescriptions. It is a conflict between globalism, which is an intellectual legacy of the cold war, and internationalism which must recognise the compulsions of interdependence and marshall solutions acknowledging the reality of independence and diversity while demanding enlightened accommodation amongst nation States. The non-aligned are in a position to realise that globalism has failed and the building blocs for international stability must start with national self-reliance, regional cooperation and the practice of non-aligned principles by the non-aligned and the so-called aligned alike.

An analysis of the world inequitable economic imbalance supported by a sense of shared grievance is

insufficient to obtain results or establish credibility of the movement. These contradictions and impotence are indeed the result of the conflict between vindicated principles of independence and diversity and the movement's preoccupation with a show of unity and solidarity. The problem has not ended with the affirmations of a declaration. Indeed, it will bedevil and burden India as we go through the succession of conferences, meetings and committees and find little headway is made in solving political or economic problems. Should China eventually seek to join the non-aligned movement? There could be no technical objection to her doing so as the Sino-Soviet Treaty has lapsed. The movement may then hark back to the 61-65 period when the debate was between anti-superpower confrontationist globalism and international cooperation based on diversity. Any way, the cause of peace and cooperation is unlikely to have been effectively advanced by the conference process.

What can one conclude from this brief survey of 21 years of the non-aligned movement? The membership has steadily increased to a comfortable and permanent majority in the UN. The principles are no longer condemned as immoral and are barely challenged by the aligned. Nationalism is securely resilient. With grass roots strength it could defeat (as in Vietnam) the most powerful superpower and against all military odds, it could defy the other superpower (as in Afghanistan). The policy of enveloping developing nations into military alliances, as in SEATO and CENTO, has proved a dismal failure. The international system has become pluralist; coexistence has become the declared goal of the aligned and non-aligned alike.

However, since 1961 the scoreboard of successes — which can be directly attributed to the non-aligned — is almost blank. The movement has, at best, been a pressure group supplementing initiatives in the UN or other international bodies. Nothing like the special or exclusive role in Korea, the Geneva Conference and the Indo-China commissions or the decisive lead

emanating from Belgrade to call a halt to nuclear testing, can be claimed. The movement had consistently focussed on decolonisation in Africa but finally the Portuguese empire collapsed in Lisbon and the Zimbabwe settlement was reached in the Commonwealth Conference in London. South Africa is still not relenting on apartheid and Namibia.

On the other hand, except the arms race of the superpowers, every other major problem which erupted has involved conflicts between or outrage against the national integrity of the non-aligned nations. The Israeli aggression in Lebanon and the consolidation of its hold on the left bank of the Jordan and the unresolved Middle-East problem, the Iraq-Iran war, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Chad, El Salvador and Central America are all challenges to non-alignment. The movement has been unwilling or unable to tackle them. It has ignored innumerable violations of non-aligned principles by its own members, including the interventions and long-term presence of foreign troops in non-aligned countries. Terrorism and subversion, outside national liberation struggles but inside independent non-aligned nations, have not been brought to book. Unable to discipline or even condemn such derelictions, the broad umbrella of non-alignment has come to shield or tolerate every deviation from the original spirit. The movement, as a principled guardian of peace and diversity thus stands enfeebled and exposed, and the consensus documents can scarcely conceal the divisions and disarray.

What are the reasons for the present loss of effective vigilance by the movement, when the principles for which it stood stand vindicated? It is true that the attempt to highjack the movement, as a natural ally of one bloc or the other, has not succeeded. The only running thread in all declarations has been the momentum of anti-imperialism and what later came to be described as neo-colonialism. Colonialism and the cold war had given birth to the idea of non-alignment: but they became both a kind of foil and fixation for its continuing momentum.

The focus on anti-imperialism had understandably given non-alignment its original anti-West tilt. As South Africa, the home of professed racism was allied and for long condoned by NATO, it reinforced the anti-West direction. But colonialism was on the retreat before the first non-aligned summit, and even in 1961, Nehru did not see that the collective focus was on flogging a dying phenomenon. There was reluctance to criticise the outrages by the other bloc or by the non-aligned themselves.

Indeed, hypnotised by past history and perceptions, the non-aligned were inhibited in any objective recognition of the changed world situation and the new problems of the post-colonial world. Collectively, they never quite saw when the non-aligned principles were no longer being questioned and challenged. When the blocs splintered, and confrontation eased to vigilant competition, the non-aligned continued to base their analysis on imperialism and the cold war. A kind of intellectual vested interest had taken root in the presumed permanence of the cold war. Thus, the posture of the movement fell short of valid contemporary attitudes.

The rapid development of long range missiles which could be targetted from home bases and submerged submarines, and the capacity of satellite and electronic surveillance, reduced the importance of countries which earlier were deemed essential for the ring of containment. The superpower hot-line, the agreement on partial ban on nuclear testing, the strategic arms-limitation talks and the creeping recognition of common interests between the superpowers even as adversaries, made the non-aligned strategically less important. The non-aligned ability to play the mediator or act the honest broker between one bloc against the other, was correspondingly narrowed if not virtually eliminated. The process of change was gradual and even suffered reversals but the non-aligned did not grasp, at least fully or in time, the implications of detente between the blocs, even though it was the fulfilment of their own proclaimed goals.

There was a similar imperceptible change affecting the economic relations of the non-aligned with the developed world. The cold war competition had brought the bounty of massive economic aid from the affluent nations. Parallel with inter-bloc dialogue and detente, the donor nations of both blocs became more selective and restrained in offering aid to the developing world. Domestic lobbies started pointing out that frequently foreign aid was wasted or diverted to prestige projects or helped to buttress the positions of the established civil or military elites.

In any case, the aid process did not obtain either the expected economic growth or secure the allegiance and gratitude in the manner hoped for by the donor nations. It was the obverse consequences of the congruence of cold war competition and decolonisation; too much early involvement and tutelage in the affairs of newly independent countries was followed by a peremptory withdrawal and disenchantment syndrome (there were, of course, exceptions but these were for special reasons or as residuary legacies of the past). The wrong rationale — security rather than international economic justice and the wrong development strategies for helping established elites rather than basic needs — had all too frequently been endorsed by the aid-givers.

Let it be acknowledged that on the side of the recipient nations the foreign aid process had, in any case, softened the determination for optimal efforts towards economic development even in such fields as food sufficiency, rural development and basic infrastructure. In many countries, nationalism was not marshalled for economic discipline and social justice, as was their own pledge in demanding independence. While verbal homage was paid to cooperation with fellow developing countries, the habit of sea-bourne trade and continued dependency on the old metropolitan countries was abetted and even intensified. The potential of regional economic co-operation was not seriously explored. In fact, where such regional institutions had been inherited, as in the East African community,

they were allowed to disintegrate for shortsighted political reasons, discounting permanent geographic and economic compulsions. The attempt to establish tripartite cooperation between Yugoslavia, Egypt and India was hurriedly conceived without seriously reflecting that the economic complimentarity between them had limited scope and doubtful potential.

As stated earlier, the OPEC cartel at one time looked as if it had picked up a uniquely powerful weapon against the modern industrial State. A substantial part of international liquidity flowed to a few developing countries, which held the promise of compelling an imaginative rationale for equitable world development. The non-aligned, however, hesitated to demand enlightened consideration from the fraternal ranks of the oil-affluent countries. The paradoxical result has been that the major oil exporters — all of them non-aligned — have become the conduit for the recycling of the scarce and hard-earned resources of the poorer importers to the coffers of the already affluent world!

When, after the energy crisis, the blueprint of a New International Economic Order was formulated and endorsed by the non-aligned, the western developed nations were able to point to the world the economic recession brought about by the sudden oil price hikes and turn a deaf ear, albeit with expressions of sympathy and vague promises for the future. The indifference of the Eastern bloc further weakened the leverage of the Third World to restructuring the world's economic relations. The present agony of the Third World — of a growing economic chasm, barriers to trade and resources — was compounded by the aid weariness of the North, insufficient efforts at self-reliance of the developing nations and the South/South energy crisis. The non-aligned movement has remained silent on how much the present economic malaise is due to the non-aligned themselves.

The commitment to disarmament, nuclear and conventional, and the plea for diversion of resources to

international economic development has also been the constant refrain of the non-aligned. However, the Third World has generally shirked from the introspective examination of its own militarization. It was an article of faith of the non-aligned that development and social justice provided a firmer basis for internal stability and external security than grandiose militarism and external dependence. The wisdom of the faith has been proven time and again, and most dramatically in Iran. But few countries — very few indeed — can claim to have upheld the principle in their own internal policies. No doubt, in part, the origin of the Third World military buildup was due to the great power policies and the commercial salesmanship of arms manufacturers. But it would be a travesty of the truth and a self-confessed slur on their sovereign discretion not to recognize that the excessive militarism has been because of the voluntary militaristic policies of most governments of the non-aligned fraternity themselves disregarding their own declared national priorities. The present problems of the non-aligned, if analytically scrutinised, can be traced to both a change in the international environment and myopia in their own policies and appraisals.

Historical reasons aside, however, the basic fact is that the enfeeblement of the movement was almost inherent in the process of institutionalising non-alignment. Non-alignment滑入了 all multilateral diplomacy. The positive thrust, envisaged by Nehru, unavoidably gave way to the lowest common denominator which covered up differences. The search for consensus led to a concentration on outdated issues of a negative nature or on unrealistic approaches. The whole process and measure of achievement got caught in drafting gamesmanship rather than problem resolution.

To reach agreed declarations, the conferences had to split up into committees, sub-committees, regional group meetings, drafting caucuses — all in imitation of UN procedures and practices. Every meeting became a tortuous nonstop drafting exercise, at times going on

for 18-20 hours in the day. Even professional diplomats when weary and bleary-eyed are apt to yield on substance and lose sight of the forest for the shrubbery. The show of verbal solidarity — transparently divorced from reality — became an all-consuming preoccupation before or at the conferences.

In a recent compilation of non-aligned documents, the Belgrade declaration has only 8 pages; the Cairo declaration after the second summit stretches to 14 pages; the Lusaka declaration and resolutions into 18 pages; for Algiers, there are 30 pages; in Colombo it jumps to 62 pages and the Havana document spreads over 94 pages. The Delhi declaration with its annexures runs to almost 160 pages. The international impact of these conference declarations has been almost in inverse ratio to the length of the recommendations. The political and economic declarations reiterated old and known positions — agreed in the UN or other agencies. The non-aligned have made recommendations on practically every problem of functional international cooperation covered by international agencies including insurance, sports, fisheries, Antarctica, etc.

While the conference documents became longer, they also became distorted in their emphasis. Whereas on non-controversial issues like racialism, or virtually defunct ones like imperialism, there is extensive elaboration, on current serious issues, the mentions are brief and bland. The declaration at the last Foreign Ministers conference in Delhi contained 10 pages on Africa (prepared no doubt by the African group) but only a brief paragraph on Afghanistan, two on South-East Asia including Kampuchea and nothing substantial on the on-going war between Iran and Iraq. There is a similar balance in the seventh summit declaration.

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of them) have the personnel or expertise to take an active interest in all subjects and all the drafting committees. Most delegations confine their interest to a few paragraphs of sensitive interest to their own country. It is doubtful if any head of a government could even cursorily glance through the totality of documents or even the political declarations to which, by adoption, they would stand committed.

Like the growing length of non-aligned documents, the diplomatic process has continued to mount and become more exacting. A nucleus of a small secretariat has had to be created in the UN delegation of the current Chairman of the movement. Apart from the meeting of the Foreign Ministers at the time of the UN General Assembly, every year there is at least one annual meeting of the Bureau at the level of Foreign Ministers. In addition, a meeting of all the Foreign Ministers takes place between the summits in one of the non-aligned capitals. Every important meeting of the Bureau and the Ministers and, more so before the summit, requires pre-conference consultations through the visits of officials to many, if not all, the capitals. The practice has even grown of sending formal invitations through special envoys instead of using the established diplomatic channels.

The conference arrangements — the Hall, the Committee rooms, the hotels and the subsidiary residential accommodation, transport, generally require years of preparation and may cost hundreds of millions of dollars, often of scarce resources. The preparations for the conference scheduled to be held in Baghdad must, one guesses, have involved an outlay of at least half a billion dollars and a good three years of planning, construction and preparation for a conference whose venue had to be shifted. (There are, of course, many other Third World capitals, specially in Africa, with magnificent conference complexes built at great expense, which are monuments to a single or occasional international meeting).

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course, be measured in monetary terms. No doubt for a week or so, the host country can rejoice in being the focus of world attention and obtain some international publicity for the country and its leadership. The professional diplomats can meet with their opposite numbers. Sometimes the summit can provide an opportunity for a more discreet meeting between heads of governments when bilateral visits may be politically premature or arouse excessive expectations. In the process a break-through might even be achieved on some subsisting difficult problems.

But, even allowing for these incidental side-benefits, can the vast assembly of thousands including one hundred heads of government and their ministers, obtain real progress on the problems on which the consensus documents make elaborate declarations at least of principles. Can the non-aligned afford the diplomatic effort and financial outlay consumed when the actual results are predictably minimal or even negative. Like the UN itself, the non-aligned conferences are apt to be used as platforms for international polemics and explanations for failures rather than constructive focus on the items on the international agenda. Needless to say that although adopted non-aligned declarations are adduced where convenient, they are not treated as mandatory any more than the resolutions of the UN. They have been flouted, in letter and spirit, with impunity by the non-aligned themselves.

The problem for the non-aligned movement is, of course, not untypical of all multi-lateral diplomacy. Conference diplomacy involving sovereign nations inherently carries the compulsions for compromise and evasions with the drafting sleight of hand. The hazard is greater when the agenda is political or open-ended, not specific or technical.

The Organisation of African Unity has confronted the same kind of differences, difficulties, of reaching consensus and enforcing its charter principles. In the case of non-alignment, however, the search for consensus unwittingly grooved the

or ulterior manœuvres; it won a seat on the non-aligned bureau with ease.

The sixth summit conference in Havana in 1979 saw the revival of the sharp debate between the moderate, hitherto quiescent majority, and the radical active confrontationists, on the purpose and direction of the movement. Cuba sought to give non-alignment a slant which was in keeping with its own national perspectives and policies. Castro had no hesitation in denouncing Yankee imperialism and its old and new allies. (The most important new ally was, of course, China, which up to 1965 had been a firm friend of Cuba). Castro did not conceal that he saw the Socialist bloc, led by the USSR, as the natural ally of the non-aligned movement.

Using the administrative advantage of being the host-country, Cuba sought to exclude the delegation of the POL Pot regime in Kampuchea, which had represented the country at the previous conferences and still held the Kampuchean seat in the United Nations. The other issue which cast its shadow on the conference was whether Sadaat's Egypt, having recognised and compromised with Israel, should be condemned by the movement as a whole.

The important question which surfaced was whether the non-aligned movement was to function democratically or be slanted to reflect the views of an activist host. President Tito's call to the conference to remain the conscience of humankind and refrain from a partisan twist was generally acclaimed but the spirit of the conference was far removed from that concept. Burma highlighted the problem when, even though an original member and loyal in letter and spirit to its policies, it withdrew after calling for a faithful adherence to non-aligned principles. In fact, the meeting ended with a feeling of impending crisis rather than unity.

The serious division in the movement got highlighted when, three months later, the USSR intervened in Afghanistan. As Cuba's own position was at variance with that

of the majority, the movement as a whole refrained from taking any initiative. As a consequence, the Cuban Chairmanship, and indeed the movement as a whole remained virtually paralysed during the next three years. The crisis was once again dramatised when the venue of the next summit, under preparation for years at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, had to be shifted from Baghdad to Delhi. The proposed host was found to be involved in a long-lasting conflict with Iran, another non-aligned country. Each was accusing the other of territorial aggression, violation of human rights, unjustified intervention and outrage against the principles of non-alignment. The mediatory effort of the non-aligned proved infructuous and, in the process, the movement itself suffered serious loss of credibility and transparent embarrassment.

At the Delhi Summit, the membership crossed the 100 mark. It was a most impressive organisational feat, particularly as it was done at only a few months notice. The professional competence of our officials was once again demonstrated. Mrs Gandhi's stewardship commanded universal admiration and the threat of the movement becoming ideologically tilted was laid to rest. Her leadership prevailed against actual disruption by controversial issues like the representation of Kampuchea. But the problems of Kampuchea and Afghanistan remain and it may well be that when the General Assembly meets, a majority of the non-aligned will repudiate the Delhi consensus. Since the conference, or as a result of it, none of the ongoing problems have been resolved or even eased on the basis of the appeal of the heads of governments. The Iraq-Iran conflict has continued with the familiar ferocity and unreason. Indeed, the two have refused to cooperate even to tackle the oil stick in the Gulf which could spell disaster to them and affect all the nations bordering that almost enclosed, critically important, international sea.

In Kampuchea, since the conference, the conflict nearly spread to Thailand and in Afghanistan the 'insurgency' has intensified. There is

little prospect of agreement on a conference to restructure the international monetary system. By asking for universal participation, the declaration may embarrass the USSR and provide an excuse for the western nations for continued indifference. The prospect of global negotiations, a meaningful launching of a Common Fund to stabilise commodity prices, support for the universal committee for International Development Strategy are old recommendations bedevilled by old and familiar resistance. What is welcome in the declaration is its programme for greater focus on South/South cooperation and its call for self-reliance and regional and intra-regional cooperation.

The Delhi declaration in fact has two contradictory strands running through it which illustrate the problem of the near universalisation of the movement. On the one hand, aside from old issues like Israeli aggression and expansionism, Namibia, apartheid, there is a kind of new globalism — anti superpower, anti-imperialism, anti-racism and for a new global economic order. But this avoids issues born out of the differences, temporary or permanent, which involve the non-aligned themselves. On the other hand, but much less strident, is the call for disciplined development and cooperation at the national and regional level and implicit recognition that diversity in the international system cannot be overcome by global prescriptions. It is a conflict between globalism, which is an intellectual legacy of the cold war, and internationalism which must recognise the compulsions of interdependence and marshall solutions acknowledging the reality of independence and diversity while demanding enlightened accommodation amongst nation States. The non-aligned are in a position to realise that globalism has failed and the building blocs for international stability must start with national self-reliance, regional cooperation and the practice of non-aligned principles by the non-aligned and the so-called aligned alike.

An analysis of the world inequitable economic imbalance supported by a sense of shared grievance is

insufficient to obtain results or establish credibility of the movement. These contradictions and impotence are indeed the result of the conflict between vindicated principles of independence and diversity and the movement's preoccupation with a show of unity and solidarity. The problem has not ended with the affirmations of a declaration. Indeed, it will bedevil and burden India as we go through the succession of conferences, meetings and committees and find little headway is made in solving political or economic problems. Should China eventually seek to join the non-aligned movement? There could be no technical objection to her doing so as the Sino-Soviet Treaty has lapsed. The movement may then hark back to the 61-65 period when the debate was between anti-superpower confrontationist globalism and international cooperation based on diversity. Any way, the cause of peace and cooperation is unlikely to have been effectively advanced by the conference process.

What can one conclude from this brief survey of 21 years of the non-aligned movement? The membership has steadily increased to a comfortable and permanent majority in the UN. The principles are no longer condemned as immoral and are barely challenged by the aligned. Nationalism is securely resilient. With grass roots strength it could defeat (as in Vietnam) the most powerful superpower and against all military odds, it could defy the other superpower (as in Afghanistan). The policy of enveloping developing nations into military alliances, as in SEATO and CENTO, has proved a dismal failure. The international system has become pluralist; coexistence has become the declared goal of the aligned and non-aligned alike.

However, since 1961 the score-board of successes — which can be directly attributed to the non-aligned — is almost blank. The movement has, at best, been a pressure group supplementing initiatives in the UN or other international bodies. Nothing like the special or exclusive role in Korea, the Geneva Conference and the Indo-China commissions or the decisive lead

emanating from Belgrade to call a halt to nuclear testing, can be claimed. The movement had consistently focussed on decolonisation in Africa but finally the Portuguese empire collapsed in Lisbon and the Zimbabwe settlement was reached in the Commonwealth Conference in London. South Africa is still not relenting on apartheid and Namibia.

On the other hand, except the arms race of the superpowers, every other major problem which erupted has involved conflicts between or outrage against the national integrity of the non-aligned nations. The Israeli aggression in Lebanon and the consolidation of its hold on the left bank of the Jordan and the unresolved Middle-East problem, the Iraq-Iran war, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Chad, El Salvador and Central America are all challenges to non-alignment. The movement has been unwilling or unable to tackle them. It has ignored innumerable violations of non-aligned principles by its own members, including the interventions and long-term presence of foreign troops in non-aligned countries. Terrorism and subversion, outside-national liberation struggles but inside independent non-aligned nations, have not been brought to book. Unable to discipline or even condemn such derelictions, the broad umbrella of non-alignment has come to shield or tolerate every deviation from the original spirit. The movement, as a principled guardian of peace and diversity thus stands enfeebled and exposed, and the consensus documents can scarcely conceal the divisions and disarray.

What are the reasons for the present loss of effective vigilance by the movement, when the principles for which it stood stand vindicated? It is true that the attempt to highjack the movement, as a natural ally of one bloc or the other, has not succeeded. The only running thread in all declarations has been the momentum of anti-imperialism and what later came to be described as neo-colonialism. Colonialism and the cold war had given birth to the idea of non-alignment: but they became both a kind of foil and fixation for its continuing momentum.

The focus on anti-imperialism had understandably given non-alignment its original anti-West tilt. As South Africa, the home of professed racism was allied and for long condoned by NATO, it reinforced the anti-West direction. But colonialism was on the retreat before the first non-aligned summit, and even in 1961, Nehru did not see that the collective focus was on flogging a dying phenomenon. There was reluctance to criticise the outrages by the other bloc or by the non-aligned themselves.

Indeed, hypnotised by past history and perceptions, the non-aligned were inhibited in any objective recognition of the changed world situation and the new problems of the post-colonial world. Collectively, they never quite saw when the non-aligned principles were no longer being questioned and challenged. When the blocs splintered, and confrontation eased to vigilant competition, the non-aligned continued to base their analysis on imperialism and the cold war. A kind of intellectual vested interest had taken root in the presumed permanence of the cold war. Thus, the posture of the movement fell short of valid contemporary attitudes.

The rapid development of long range missiles which could be targeted from home bases and submerged submarines, and the capacity of satellite and electronic surveillance, reduced the importance of countries which earlier were deemed essential for the ring of containment. The superpower hot-line, the agreement on partial ban on nuclear testing, the strategic arms-limitation talks and the creeping recognition of common interests between the superpowers even as adversaries, made the non-aligned strategically less important. The non-aligned ability to play the mediator or act the honest broker between one bloc against the other, was correspondingly narrowed if not virtually eliminated. The process of change was gradual and even suffered reversals but the non-aligned did not grasp, at least fully or in time, the implications of detente between the blocs, even though it was the fulfilment of their own proclaimed goals.

There was a similar imperceptible change affecting the economic relations of the non-aligned with the developed world. The cold war competition had brought the bounty of massive economic aid from the affluent nations. Parallel with inter-bloc dialogue and detente, the donor nations of both blocs became more selective and restrained in offering aid to the developing world. Domestic lobbies started pointing out that frequently foreign aid was wasted or diverted to prestige projects or helped to buttress the positions of the established civil or military elites.

In any case, the aid process did not obtain either the expected economic growth or secure the allegiance and gratitude in the manner hoped for by the donor nations. It was the obverse consequences of the congruence of cold war competition and decolonisation; too much early involvement and tutelage in the affairs of newly independent countries was followed by a peremptory withdrawal and disenchantment syndrome (there were, of course, exceptions but these were for special reasons or as residuary legacies of the past). The wrong rationale — security rather than international economic justice and the wrong development strategies for helping established elites rather than basic needs — had all too frequently been endorsed by the aid-givers.

Let it be acknowledged that on the side of the recipient nations the foreign aid process had, in any case, softened the determination for optimal efforts towards economic development even in such fields as food sufficiency, rural development and basic infrastructure. In many countries, nationalism was not marshalled for economic discipline and social justice, as was their own pledge in demanding independence. While verbal homage was paid to cooperation with fellow developing countries, the habit of sea-bourne trade and continued dependency on the old metropolitan countries was abetted and even intensified. The potential of regional economic co-operation was not seriously explored. In fact, where such regional institutions had been inherited, as in the East African community,

they were allowed to disintegrate for shortsighted political reasons, discounting permanent geographic and economic compulsions. The attempt to establish tripartite cooperation between Yugoslavia, Egypt and India was hurriedly conceived without seriously reflecting that the economic complimentarity between them had limited scope and doubtful potential.

As stated earlier, the OPEC cartel at one time looked as if it had picked up a uniquely powerful weapon against the modern industrial State. A substantial part of international liquidity flowed to a few developing countries, which held the promise of compelling an imaginative rationale for equitable world development. The non-aligned, however, hesitated to demand enlightened consideration from the fraternal ranks of the oil-affluent countries. The paradoxical result has been that the major oil exporters — all of them non-aligned — have become the conduit for the recycling of the scarce and hard-earned resources of the poorer importers to the coffers of the already affluent world!

When, after the energy crisis, the blue print of a New International Economic Order was formulated and endorsed by the non-aligned, the western developed nations were able to point to the world the economic recession brought about by the sudden oil price hikes and turn a deaf ear, albeit with expressions of sympathy and vague promises for the future. The indifference of the Eastern bloc further weakened the leverage of the Third World to restructuring the world economic relations. The present agony of the Third World — of a growing economic chasm, barriers to trade and resources — was compounded by the aid weariness of the North, insufficient efforts at self-reliance of the developing nations and the South/South energy crisis. The non-aligned movement has remained silent on how much the present economic malaise is due to the non-aligned themselves.

The commitment to disarmament, nuclear and conventional, and the plea for diversion of resources to

international economic development has also been the constant refrain of the non-aligned. However, the Third World has generally shirked from the introspective examination of its own militarization. It was an article of faith of the non-aligned that development and social justice provided a firmer basis for internal stability and external security than grandiose militarism and external dependence. The wisdom of the faith has been proven time and again, and most dramatically in Iran. But few countries — very few indeed — can claim to have upheld the principle in their own internal policies. No doubt, in part, the origin of the Third World military buildup was due to the great power policies and the commercial salesmanship of arms manufacturers. But it would be a travesty of the truth and a self-confessed slur on their sovereign discretion not to recognize that the excessive militarism has been because of the voluntary militaristic policies of most governments of the non-aligned fraternity themselves disregarding their own declared national priorities. The present problems of the non-aligned, if analytically scrutinised, can be traced to both a change in the international environment and myopia in their own policies and appraisals.

Historical reasons aside, however, the basic fact is that the enfeeblement of the movement was almost inherent in the process of institutionalising non-alignment. Non-alignment滑, no doubt unawares, into the pitfalls of all multilateral diplomacy. The positive thrust, envisaged by Nehru, unavoidably gave way to the lowest common denominator which covered up differences. The search for consensus led to a concentration on outdated issues of a negative nature or on unrealistic approaches. The whole process and measure of achievement got caught in drafting gamesmanship rather than problem resolution.

To reach agreed declarations, the conferences had to split up into committees, sub-committees, regional group meetings, drafting caucuses — all in imitation of UN procedures and practices. Every meeting became a tortuous nonstop drafting exercise, at times going on

for 18-20 hours in the day. Even professional diplomats when weary and bleary-eyed are apt to yield on substance and lose sight of the forest for the shrubbery. The show of verbal solidarity — transparently divorced from reality — became an all-consuming preoccupation before or at the conferences.

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second 'periphery' located in the tribal and isolated areas of several major States (especially West Bengal, Bihar and Andhra). Many of these areas were allowed considerable autonomy by the British, and some tribal groups expected that independence would continue this pattern.⁶

Even today there are large areas of India and Pakistan where normal administrative procedures do not apply, and tribal customs exist without serious interference from central government officials. In some regions in both States, special para-military units have been raised from local populations (but commanded by officers on deputation from the army) to provide a token governmental presence and to watch the frontiers. These are backed up by regular army units; where tribal power spills over into a campaign for independence neither State has hesitated to use massive ground and air power to assert national sovereignty.

This task is complicated because many tribal groups (especially in Pakistan) have close ties across the international frontier and move freely back and forth using foreign territory as a safe haven; in India some groups resent the encroachment of plains Indians and fear the destruction of their tribal culture, and in a few regions tribal and poor peasant groups have been mobilized along classic Maoist revolutionary lines. In dealing with these conflicts, both India and Pakistan have carefully studied the counter-insurgency doctrine, and in several cases have made their own contribution to this branch of the science of war.

A fourth variety of conflict in South Asia has pitted regional States against non-regional powers. The 1962 Sino-Indian war in the Himalayas and the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union are best seen as the latest examples of a long search for influence if not dominance in a political shatter-zone. The names of the players have changed, but elements of the 'great

game' remain: it still does matter to China, the Soviet Union, India and Pakistan who controls the marchland across their borders.

States such as Nepal and Afghanistan have survived by maintaining a tenuous balance between their powerful neighbours; recent events in the latter indicate how tenuous it is, and how great is the price of miscalculation. For India and Pakistan the situation is further complicated by the sometimes confusing role that the U.S. has played for at least twenty years.

While motivated primarily by considerations of anti-communism, American support has necessarily affected the relationship between these two States, sometimes defeating the original purpose of assistance. One symbolic but important example will suffice: in 1962 the nuclear aircraft carrier, *U.S.S. Enterprise*, was dispatched to the Bay of Bengal to demonstrate support for the Indians in their struggle against Communist China; exactly nine years later the *Enterprise* again sailed into the Bay, this time in an implied threat to India and to demonstrate to China that it was willing to support their mutual ally, Pakistan.

Finally, we must also note the possibility of a fifth type of conflict in South Asia — nuclear war. It is conceivable that within the next few years both India and Pakistan will have acquired the capability of delivering at least a few nuclear weapons. India's nuclear objectives are probably quite ambitious; a missile system capable of reaching China; Pakistan 'only' seeks a few weapons to deter India.

In either case there are major implications for the way in which these two States might fight a conventional war in the future: a nuclear weapon will force major changes in strategy and tactics; it might also provide the umbrella under which massive conventional wars can take place — just as it might make the dangers of escalation so great that such wars will never occur again. And of great importance will be the implications of an Indian or Pakistani nuclear

system on the war plans of the major nuclear powers (two of which adjoin the region).

These calculations of the interaction between levels of violence are not new to the region. Historically, there has always been a linkage at a lower level of violence between Indian and Pakistani capacity to control insurrection and outright conventional war: the 1947 war over Kashmir, the 1962 Sino-Indian war, the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, and the 1971 war in East Pakistan all began as low-level conflicts and escalated when one side or the other saw that it was losing or that a higher level of violence might work to its relative advantage. The ease with which the region has slipped into large-scale war does not offer much reassurance for the future.

The image of South Asia held in the West is that of a poor, over-crowded region, whose States are unnecessarily diverting resources to weaponry and away from peaceful economic pursuits. From this perspective the level of poverty is so great that it exceeds the horrors of war: thus, Indian and Pakistani arms budgets are immoral in a way that such expenditures in the West are not. Since such poverty is self-evident and pernicious, and the disasters of war are clearly man-made and perverse, the regimes which devote any resources to expenditures beyond those necessary for internal order are either stupid or delinquent. Therefore, a programme of education or pressure, or both, is justified on the part of the liberal West in dealing with Indians, Pakistanis and others who wish to purchase our advanced jet fighters, our tanks, or (most recently) our nuclear fuel.

Reinforcing the view that war is a luxury that the poor cannot afford is another perspective: nuclear war is a danger that man cannot risk. Since the introduction of nuclear weapons, this argument has dominated American strategic literature. All wars, even those between weak regional powers, run the risk of escalation. Ultimately, this means the employment of nuclear weapons, and no rational purpose can be

6. See Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), for a thoughtful study of nativist movements in India.

served by a nuclear exchange.⁷ 'Limited' wars may be possible, but even conservative strategists do not advocate them lightly.

When regional States approach or step across the nuclear threshold, then the risks and the costs of regional war increase in geometrical progression. Even if the superpowers are not sucked into regional nuclear conflicts, the physical and political fallout (including the proliferation of weapons to Africa and Latin America; the Middle East and South Asia) affects us all.

Whatever the degree of truth contained within these images, they are not widely shared by the security elites of South Asia.⁸ While the region is usually associated with philosophies of non-violence and non-alignment, Indian and Pakistani elites in fact have a world-view strongly shaped by war and the threat of war.

First, there is a widespread — and not entirely inaccurate — impression that the region lost its independence because of an inability to adjust to modern warfare in the 17th-century. The colonial powers — Portugal, Holland, France and, finally, the British — brought not only superior weaponry but also superior methods of military organization. A lesson from this period is that independence and freedom is not only dependent upon a willingness to fight, but on the possession of the most modern military technology.

Second, independence was partially achieved by the threat of violence — more precisely because the British were unable and unwilling to use force to contain the wave

7. This is not shared by some. Besides those who develop the doctrine for limited nuclear war (doctrine which is read in South Asia) there are those such as Kenneth Waltz in the U.S. and many in Europe who do not regard the proliferation problem as very critical. They argue that the global system can manage the gradual increase in nuclear States. See Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May be Better* (London: IISS Adelphi Paper No 197, 1981).

8. See Stephen P. Cohen, *Perception, Influence, and Weapons Proliferation in South Asia* (unclassified report prepared for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. Department of State, August 20, 1979).

of rebellion that swept over India in 1946. The Royal Indian Navy had mutinied; discharged soldiers were being formed into guerrilla and robber bands; terrorism and sabotage was increasing, the political parties were mobilising for direct action, and no one was able to stop the spreading communal riots. Both India and Pakistan were born to the accompaniment of one of this century's most terrible mass slaughters and the knowledge that this could recur is one of the unspoken assumptions of regional relations.

Third, these communal riots were followed by a direct struggle between India and Pakistan for control over Kashmir. Even though their respective armies were commanded by British generals (and for a while there was a joint British command) an inconclusive war broke out; thirty-three years later Indian and Pakistani troops today face each other across the same cease-fire line.

Indians and Pakistanis see a direct linkage between the events of 1947 and their present political and military stalemate. The 1947 war led to the rearmament of India and Pakistan, and this in turn almost triggered a war in the 1950s; after India was plunged into a major conflict with China in 1962 it received some military grant and sales assistance from the West.⁹ This aid shifted the balance between India and Pakistan and shaped perceptions and expectations in both States, leading to a minor skirmish and then a major war in 1965, again over Kashmir.

The way in which this war was fought shaped internal Pakistani expectations and fanned secessionist feelings in East Pakistan; when these feelings were expressed through the ballot box and a civil uprising they led to the events (especially the mass movement of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan into India) which caused India to consider its options and then assume *de facto* direction of the Bangladesh liberation movement.

9. This totalled about \$ 90 million in grants. What was galling to India and Pakistan was the cut-off of American support as soon as hostilities began in 1965, hurting Pakistan far more than India. See Stephen P. Cohen, 'U.S. Weapons and South Asia: A Policy Analysis', *Pacific Affairs*, 49, 1 (Spring, 1976), p. 50.

A full-scale invasion in the East led directly to the creation of the new State of Bangladesh. But during that war a decision was taken by India which prepared the ground for a new kind of escalation. Concerned about India's lack of political support and the outright hostility of Pakistan's powerful allies, Indira Gandhi authorized work on a nuclear explosive device; apparently, immediately *after* the 1971 war, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto initiated Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, and the stage was set for a nuclear arms race. In brief, some of the most significant events in the sub-continent have been war-related, and war itself has had unanticipated consequences which led to new conflicts.

Fourth, both States found themselves occupying territory which was deemed strategic by others. Pakistan overlooks the approach to the Persian Gulf and shares a border with Iran; it has a long (and disputed) border with Afghanistan, and controls Afghanistan's access to the sea; it is thus the legatee of the British Indian Empire in its relations with the Russians. The Indians share a long frontier with China, a frontier which is still in open dispute. Even if these two new States had tried to ignore their proximity to Russia and China they were encouraged to exploit it by the western powers who were eager to erect barriers to communist expansionism in the cold war.

Fifth, there are a number of latent and active regional disputes which have led to threats of force and may yet result in open warfare. One such dispute is over the distribution of water resources which are shared by several countries; India and Pakistan once barely managed to avert open conflict over this issue and, more recently, there have been differences between India, Nepal and Bangladesh over the use of the Ganges and Brahmaputra waters.¹⁰

10. This is an issue virtually untouched by contemporary scholarship; for a hard-headed analysis of the political and strategic stake, see Jagat Mehta, 'The Annual Floods: A Challenge to International Diplomacy', *Times of India*, September 25, 1982.

Two similar issues are the treatment of immigrant or ethnic minorities (Nepalis in India, Indians in Sri Lanka) and the access through one South Asian State to another or to the sea (Nepal through India, Afghanistan through Pakistan). There is little regional cooperation on such matters. This is partly because of the difficulty of compromise when resources are inadequate for one State, let alone two, but partly because of the different strategic perspectives of India and its smaller neighbours.

Hawkish Indians argue that regional cooperation will come when the smaller States of the region acknowledge India's dominance as a regional great power; India could then afford to be generous in such negotiations. Some of its neighbours, however, remain skeptical, and insist (as does Pakistan) on the retention of a substantial military capability to defend its interests or on regional consultation to present a more united front to their giant neighbour. Should India grow impatient with the attempts of its smaller neighbours to assert their independence it is not inconceivable that it will use force to bring them into line as it used force against Hyderabad, Junagadh, Goa, Kashmir and, more recently, Sikkim.

Finally, both States have been continuously active within their own territories in suppressing tribal and regional revolt. Some of these have been easy to manage, others (such as the Naga and Mizo rebellions) are semi-permanent in nature. They stand as vivid reminders that the power of the central governments of India and Pakistan extend only so far as effective military force can be applied, even if the application of that force generates its own resentment among Baluchis, Pathans, Mizos, Nagas and others.

To summarize some of the experiences and images of war in South Asia in proposition form, these seem to be most important.

The world is neo-Hobbesian — in regional terms the cynical Kautilya still provides guidance for many

Indians and militant Islam for many Pakistanis; no one can be trusted unless one has the power to enforce an agreement.

—Indo-Pakistan relations (and to a lesser degree, Indo-Bangladesh relations) are still affected by communal and religious tension; this means that the very identity of one State is a challenge to the identity of the other; it also means that the internal management of minority groups (Muslims in India, Hindus in Bangladesh, Tamils in Sri Lanka) is not merely a domestic but an international problem as well.

—Self-reliance is vital. This view came early to India, more recently to Pakistan. Without it, external arms suppliers will exploit the nation's vulnerability during wartime and attempt to manipulate regional relations.

—For India, regional war can best be prevented by the existence of a single, dominant, and tolerant regional great power (itself); India has achieved this dominance vis a vis Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, but not Pakistan.

—For Pakistan, regional war can best be prevented by the possession of countervailing military power, a close association of the smaller States which surround India, and the support of friendly external powers.

—The borders of South Asia are long, difficult to protect, and highly permeable to penetration from the outside. Subversion of restless domestic tribes and ethnic minorities by outsiders is expected.

—Both India and Pakistan believe that they face multiple military threats: India from China and Pakistan, Pakistan from India and the Soviet Union; they are thus particularly resistant to suggestions that they settle their own bi-lateral disputes, since such disputes have long since become entangled with broader Sino-Soviet and U.S.-Soviet conflicts.

—Despite the presumed manageability of war, it can have profound and unexpected domestic political consequences.

—Nuclear weapons are most likely to be used when one State possesses them and another does not: the only historical example of their actual use in wartime is 'proof' of this assertion.

It is widely thought that war is an effective means of centralizing State power; yet, some evidence suggests that war is feared by ruling elites as threatening to their power. The experience of South Asia supports both arguments: preparation for war, 'militancy' in Stanislaw Andreski's terms, is a device used by elites of India and Pakistan to enhance their own power and that of the central governments. Yet, these elites are aware that actual warfare can lead to unpredictable results and that after every major conflict the power of central leaders has suffered.

This is most obviously true after military defeat (India in 1962, Pakistan in 1971) but it is also true to some degree after military stalemate (Ayub's decline began after Pakistan fought to a draw in 1965 when victory was expected). Even victory proved costly to Indira Gandhi after 1971: she managed to consolidate her own power but the cost of the war affected Indian economic growth and the euphoria generated by the defeat of Pakistan may have raised popular expectations to unfulfillable levels.

In the long run, security elites of both States would seem to find a state of no-war, no-peace, to be an optimum situation. It allows them to internationalize domestic problems (such as the treatment of religious or ethnic minorities) and domesticate international problems (the status of Kashmir, the support of insurgents by external powers); a degree of international tension justifies the continued build-up of State owned defence production facilities, work on nuclear explosives, and an evasive attitude toward regional detente; a degree of domestic tension justifies the maintenance of preventive detention laws or martial law, censorship of the press, and an elaborate domestic intelligence network; it is hard to govern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh at the

best of times even without the advantage of such arrangements.

While the politics of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are all characterized by this civilian militarism, there are important differences between India on the one hand and Pakistan and Bangladesh on the other in the degree and effectiveness of actual civilian control over the military.

India is the surprise of the Third World in that its army has not played a significant role in politics. This has not prevented outside observers from predicting the imminent intervention of the generals, following the example set by Pakistan and even Bangladesh. The most superficial examination of these countries indicates why the military has not intervened in India, although it also points to some weaknesses in the system.¹¹

First and foremost, Indian civilian politicians and civil servants retained a complex administrative and fiscal control system instituted by the British in the early 20th century. Secondly, and of utmost importance, Indian politicians managed their affairs in such a way as to provide at least reasonably effective government, and accepted a good portion of the blame for the military defeat of 1962.

In Pakistan the military were less competent but more important for the survival of the State, and as they began to interfere in politics as early as 1953, they provided both an excuse as well as a way out for the political community to escape their responsibility to govern. Only Bhutto saw the problem clearly, but he lacked the personal qualities which would enable him both to govern effectively, and pacify the military. A similar situation occurred in Bangladesh when it became clear that Mujibur Rahman was not equal to what may have been an impossible task.

There is considerable self-satisfaction among Indians at their nearly unique achievement, and they tend to assume that their generals will never stage a coup. In fact, there has been a slow accretion of power to the military, partly because civi-

lians are extremely attentive to their requests for modern weapons, but also because the Indian political system has entered a period of enormous uncertainty.

Defence has become a politically important ministry because of the patronage it commands and because of its association with the military; it was used subtly by several defense ministers to enhance their own power, and quite crudely for the same purpose by Bansi Lal. It is possible that, should no clear leadership emerge from the present political disorder in India, the military will be consulted by one political faction or another (or by Mrs. Gandhi herself); there was some indication that this occurred during the Emergency, and if the process continued over a period of years the end of the decade could find the Indian military confronted with the same dilemma faced by the Pakistan and Bangladesh armies in recent years.¹²

If the chaos of politics begins to affect preparedness of the country, does the military itself have an obligation to itself and to the State to support those groups (or intervene itself) to restore order and stability? I doubt that this will occur soon, but continued political disorder, a renewal of conflict with one or more neighbours, and the nuclearization of the region could change the context in which civilian control is presently exercised and prove the pessimists correct.

When Dick Park and I wrote about India's emergence as a regional dominant power, we were engaged in a task of persuasion rather than one of prediction. Indeed, even the Nixon Administration had admitted India's dominant regional status by 1972; we were belaboring the obvious, although there are still some who refuse to acknowledge the realities of the situation.¹³

11. For a warning that should be heeded, see Ramesh Thapar, *An Indian Future* (New Delhi: Allied, 1981), and "The Military Establishment," *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 12, 1979.

12. See the astonishingly inept memorandum circulated by the Heritage Foundation at the time of Indira Gandhi's visit to the United States in 1982.

What we were not sensitive to were the possible variations implied in the regional-dominant position, and the influence that outside powers might have on regional balances (or, more properly, imbalances). We did suggest the possibility of Pakistan developing close ties with the Soviet Union. This was seemingly an outlandish idea, but in fact one quite popular in Pakistan even today, and even among the not-so-pro-American Pakistan military.¹³

Predictions about the future are risky, but there will be a future. T.S. Elliot made the point when he wrote that 'We cannot think of a future that is not liable like the past, to have no destination,' and he muses (along with Krishna—most appropriately for this essay), that the future remains 'pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened.' Without presuming to open the book, it is possible to suggest the range of likely futures in five or ten years from now. What will the regional structure of South Asia be then? Will we look back to 1982 or 1983 (as we might look back to 1963-64 or 1968-69, two critical years) and say that if only this or that had been done, then the region would be quite different?

Excluding the improbable, the unlikely, or the unpredictable (nuclear war, unprecedented mass famine, destructive political chaos), but assuming a continued Soviet presence in Afghanistan, dependence on Middle Eastern oil, and new accretions of nuclear technology, what is the range of the near-term future? I see four alternative regional security structures.

1. India vs. Pakistan

Essentially, a continuation of thirty-four years of hostility between India and Pakistan, with each seeking and obtaining support from one or more outside powers. The alignment might remain India+U.S.S.R. vs. Pakistan+PRC and USA. The rivalry between the two subcontinental powers is likely to be nuclear-

13. Cohen and Park, *India: Emergent Power?* (New York: Crane Russak, 1978), pp. 68 ff.

ized, perhaps extended to the Gulf (where each will have to harmonize its interests with its superpower patron), and above all, remain unstable. Both sides will be prepared for conventional war, will have adopted a first-strike doctrine, and will be trying to figure out how to utilize nuclear weapons for tactical as well as strategic purposes. This is a regional system with a high degree of instability.

2. India vs. Pakistan, managed by U.S.S.R.

This system is likely only if there is a major change of government in Pakistan. The Soviet Union may then emerge as the 'balancer' of South Asia, inducing and threatening both regional powers into cooperation. Conceivably, the Soviet Union might find a fully cooperative Pakistan amenable to 'Finlandization', now openly advocated by some Pakistani intellectuals and abandon its support for India altogether in favour of the strategically equally useful Pakistan.

3. Indian domination

An exasperated India concerned about a competing rival supplied by outside powers and on the verge of nuclearization may simplify regional relations by eliminating Pakistan as a military power. A re-vivisected Pakistan (with an independent but disarmed West Punjab) would not tilt the balance of Indian domestic politics, and would only temporarily complicate India's relations with the Gulf States but it would put Indian and Soviet troops across the border (the Indus?) from each other; unless India was willing to continue its balancing role vis a vis China, it would not find the Soviets generous in the distribution of spheres of influence, and a variation of (2) might emerge.

4. Contained India as regional leader

A system in which Indian economic and military dominance is apparent and accepted, but other regional States are allowed the possibility of opting out by expanding their ties with each other and (most importantly) external powers.

Nuclear proliferation may have occurred, but by negotiation and agreement between India and Pakistan (as to levels, targets, command and control procedures, etc.); mechanisms exist to establish regional consensus on the flow of weapons into the region, the development of nuclear weapons, the role of regional States in the Gulf, and the presence of superpowers in the region. India is *primus inter pares*, but all States have veto power that can be enforced by their withdrawal.

nuclear weapons enter into the arsenals of both States. I will explore this in detail below.

C. Pursue long-term economic projects which are mutually entangling and which create costs for both sides if either decides to pull out. Such projects might include joint ventures in the Gulf, sharing of river water, the co-production of electricity (in nuclear facilities, as David Lilienthal was arguing just before his death), and even weapons coproduction or sharing.

D. Develop a region-specific doctrine, supplementing non-alignment, which protects the interests of the smaller regional States while conceding to the largest its dominant status. Such a doctrine might provide guidelines for regional summits, mechanisms for joint responses to events elsewhere (particularly when the interests of one or more regional States are at stake) and which set down the conditions for the economic, political, or military presence of a superpower in the region.

T

The most likely future (1) may occur because no important power is very unhappy with it — or at least every important power can veto any change by threatening to bring about something worse.

In the case of the superpowers, the Soviet Union probably favors the present imbalanced balance between India and Pakistan and will manipulate it for its own ends. It may not wish to make Pakistan an ally or even become the arbiter of a region which is of mixed or marginal interest to the Soviets.¹⁴ This would change to the degree that they come to view Pakistan as a Southwest Asian or Gulf power. The U.S. does not lose from the present arrangement but it would gain from a regional accord (even if it was excluded from the region). So, the superpowers present obsta-

14. There remains some uncertainty as to the relative value of India for the Soviets in their dealings with China and the Non-Aligned Movement as compared to Pakistan's value vis a vis the Islamic world, Afghanistan, and the Gulf. It obviously suits the Soviet interest to let India and Pakistan believe that they each remain — or are becoming — of great strategic importance to the Soviet Union,

cles — but not insuperable ones — to movement towards Scenario 4.

The smaller regional powers, including Pakistan, gain their leverage through conflicts between India and other States. The current India-China border negotiations will threaten such States unless assurances of the preservation of legitimate external ties (including military ones) are part of an arrangement.

For slightly different reasons, there are many groups and institutions in India that oppose regional reconciliation if it does not mean absolute Indian dominance. Not only do specific groups favour the present arrangement for ideological reasons, but their careers are linked to the Indian military-industrial complex. This has served as a useful safety-valve for domestic political purposes but reduction in arms levels in India (and in Pakistan, as in 1951 and 1977) would raise domestic political problems.

There are technical military and arms control problems associated with Scenario 4. The rapid introduction of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) in the region is part of a broad technical military revolution; the difficult thing about such revolutions is that it is not possible to predict how they will turn out, and whether PGMs and other new weapons may not make it more difficult to achieve a reduction in arms, a pull-back of forces, etc.

Both India and Pakistan have 'two-front' war situations, but they are asymmetrically vulnerable to air attack and have different kinds of vulnerability 'on the ground'. India's Jaguars have pushed the Pakistan Air Force to within sixty seconds of Afghan bases, and both countries have high-value targets open to attack from the other side (nuclear facilities, irrigation and hydel works, as well as population centers). Wars in the region have necessarily been limited, and it only remains to specify their future parameters; talk about 'regretting the next war' is not very helpful, and feeds first-strike fanaticism in both countries.

To summarize the nuclear proliferation issue, it needs only to be

pointed out that coordination of regional nuclear programmes will yield far more influence on superpowers and oil States than competition, which is used by outsiders for their own purposes. If India and Pakistan can agree on levels or plateaus, no first-strike declarations and some command and control procedures, then outsiders need only ratify the arrangement — as long as it does not promote proliferation into more unstable regions.

South Asia's movement from Scenario 1 to something else has already begun. The Soviet invasion and the competition for oil and energy has ensured that nuclear energy and nuclear weapons will remain linked. Since 1972 Indian generals have been increasingly unwilling to adopt a patient or tolerant attitude towards Pakistan, and this in turn goads Pakistan to search for a weapon that will forever replace fickle friends.

In short, there is good cause for war in South Asia, and reason to believe that it would 'normalize' relations between India and its neighbours once and for all. Yet despite the temptation, the costs of changing the regional structure by force are enormous. My estimation is that more people will die in a war in which only dams were attacked than one in which cities were targets. Scenario 4 is worth considering, and India is the key factor.

India must debate the question whether or not it wants permanently hostile neighbours or whether it wishes to reach a peaceful settlement with them. Does it subscribe to Kautilya's image of the world, or Nehru's? Are Soviet weapons more important than good relations with the neighbours against whom those weapons will be used? My own answer would be no: weapons can be acquired elsewhere, but India's neighbours will stay in the region forever. Without an Indian willingness to debate and move on this issue, other States can do very little — but they can do something.

The U.S. in particular can play a constructive twofold role. First, it

can encourage China to grant those territorial concessions which will satisfy Indian security interests without harming its own. Second, it can link American arms transfers to regional States to criteria jointly established by India and Pakistan. The same (but broadened to include other regional States) applies to regional economic projects. Thirdly, it can continue its pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan, but not ignore the possibility of a political settlement. Any attempts to bleed the Soviets indefinitely may be gratifying, but it will hardly take much pressure off NATO or China.

In the end, the two major regional powers, Pakistan and India, will largely shape regional developments. Pakistan is the State with most to gain and most to lose. No Pakistani leader can easily enter into a regional accord with India without ironclad guarantees that it will not again be subjected to pressure, attack, or even dismemberment. The Pakistani nuclear programme is not in itself such a guarantee, nor can American or Chinese assurances be relied upon in a major crisis. The only guarantee that counts is one given by the Indians, but, that in turn places Pakistan at the mercy of the shifting balance of power within India. But Pakistan is not without resources in affecting that balance of power; it can agree to compromise on territorial issues, and it can provide assurances in matters of communal harmony, relations with the Islamic world, and induction of weapons into the region.

India, as the region's dominant State, has been urged by neighbours and friendly outsiders to act in a magnanimous fashion. Yet, this is politically unpopular in India, and many Indian elites still see their own country as weak, fragile and vulnerable. They prefer to react, not to undertake new initiative, and they remain suspicious of the efforts of other regional States to develop protective ties with outside powers. It may take another shock as great as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to prompt India to assume the leadership role which is its due.



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Changing world perceptions

THOMAS W. WILSON, JR.

THE subject of national security is now out of the closet. At long last this topic lies loose in the public domain — outside, more or less, the strict confines of bureaucratic isolation, official secrecy and the arcane complexity of the strategic calculus. And it seems safe to assume we are still in the preliminary stages of a thorough-going re-examination of our beliefs, theories, doctrines, traditions, and mind-sets that underlie policy and strategy in the realm of security for nations and peoples. More likely than not, this will turn out to be an agonizing, protracted and noisy process — verging, perhaps, on trauma at times — for the stakes are very high and the issues are very emotional.

But, the evidence of intellectual ferment and political turbulence about national security is all around us. At one end of the spectrum, peace research — or, as some call it, world order studies or global issues analysis — is becoming a minor but respectable area of continuing academic inquiry. One college president recently urged, in an article in *The New York Times*, that universities and colleges start teaching about national security problems as part of the regular curriculum. The Congress may or may not establish a National Peace Academy to study and teach non-violent resolution of international conflict.

At the other end of the spectrum, the pro-peace, anti-nuclear war movements not only can mount

political demonstrations across the land, but they can hold every Congressman's feet to the fire in the coming debates over nuclear policy and military budgets. And it is this that has dragged the subjects of security out of the closet and into the public view.

How did all this blossom forth so suddenly? Where did it come from so unexpectedly?

I doubt if anyone can yet be sure of the answers to such questions. It has been suggested that the American movement caught fire from the anti-nuclear demonstrations in Europe last year; but we all know that a political movement cannot be transplanted successfully from one society to another unless the psychological and political soil already is well prepared to receive and to nourish it. Then, of course, there have been high-level insinuations that the nuclear freeze movement is being master-minded in the enemy camp, but the Catholic bishops were not intimated — and these allegations are now being used in fund-raising appeals in the anti-nuclear war campaign.

My own view is that the present peace movement has grown directly out of the American experience over the past few decades — without benefit or need for external inspiration from friend or foe. This, it seems to me, is almost self-evident from the fact that the mainstream of the movement is middle-class, middle-aged, and mid-America. It is non-partisan and non-ideological — belonging to neither the Left nor the Right wings of the political spectrum. What with doctors and lawyers and nurses and police chiefs and volunteer firemen in the ranks,

*Taken from a text prepared for the membership meeting of the U.S. Association for The Club of Rome, San Francisco, November 5, 1982.

it may indeed be the most respectable mass movement ever to take to the streets. But, to put this contemporary American phenomenon in context, we have to go back, briefly, to the dawn of the nuclear age.

I believe it is very important to our understanding of the present peace movement to bear in mind that, in the shadow of the first mushroom cloud, the official reaction of the United States government to the advent of nuclear power was clear and it was this: something revolutionary has happened that cannot be reconciled with traditional behaviour in international affairs. This was the view of an interim committee, mostly of scientists, that advised the Secretary of War before the first atomic bomb was detonated. This was the view of many distinguished military leaders of the second world war.

This was the view of the United States Senate whose Special Committee on Atomic Energy promptly placed the whole nuclear enterprise in the United States under civilian control and under the umbrella of the Federal government through passage of the Atomic Energy Act, which at the time was called the most radical act ever passed in the U.S. Congress.

And this was the view of the President of the United States. In a special message to Congress within a few weeks after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, President Truman said that atomic energy involves forces 'too dangerous to fit into any of our usual concepts ... too revolutionary to consider in the framework of old ideas.' This could hardly be more clear: the nuclear reality, the President was saying, cannot be squared with the political-military tradition that has dominated international relations for the past several centuries. And on the basis of that conviction, the U.S. government prepared and presented to the newly created United Nations a remarkable proposal to place all dangerous aspects of nuclear energy under the exclusive control of a U.N. Atomic Energy Authority — beginning with the mining of uranium ore.

The U.S. was at pains to emphasize the constructive aspects of a world cooperative for the scientific development of peaceful uses of atomic energy — to emphasize the developmental rather than the regulatory role. But there was no way to avoid the radical nature of the American proposal: the proposed Atomic Energy Authority would have been a supranational world agency with the capacity to make its own decisions, to work without hindrance anywhere in the world, to bypass the principle of national sovereignty where atomic science is concerned, and to operate outside the authority of the Security Council in order to escape the veto power of the permanent members. This was the only alternative the U.S. government could see to an uncontrolled and, inescapably, competitive development of nuclear technology — that is to say, a nuclear arms race among the major allies of the war just ended.

The American alternative was not acceptable to the Soviet Union. Within a year after Hiroshima, the atomic genie was out of the bottle, and the nuclear arms race was out in the open. This is to say that the Soviet rejection of the proposal to internationalize atomic energy forced the U.S. government — lacking any perceived alternative — to try to do precisely what President Truman had said we could *not* do — that is, to fit the new atomic reality into the framework of 'usual concepts' and 'old ideas.'

And it is in just this sense that the nuclear arms race is best understood — as a long and strenuous struggle to reconcile nuclear weapons with the pre-atomic concepts of a geo-political worldview — concepts about the nature of international relations — about the conduct of diplomacy — about the uses of power — about the search for security and the perception of vital national interests. Most specifically, the U.S. - Soviet strategic arms race — which makes no sense at all militarily — can be understood more easily as the manifestation of a vast intellectual and conceptual effort to stuff the nuclear age into the hand-me-down framework of political-military tradition

— that particular set of 'usual concepts' and 'old ideas' that have informed the international behaviour of nations, especially major powers, for several centuries past.

This background is relevant to the present peace movement because that movement is a belated validation by the public at large of President Truman's original judgment: nuclear power just will not fit the traditional ways in which nation has related to nation on planet earth. And so the present peace movement can be seen best as a struggle for liberation from the conceptual trap of the geo-political worldview and its political-military traditions — a struggle that started with a remarkable consensus of American scientists, soldiers and politicians at the very dawn of the nuclear age.

But why has it taken so long for this broad public reaction to set in? Where has everybody *been* for all these years?

I believe a lot of factors contributed to this long delay in the great debate over nuclear power. Nuclear weapons offered a relatively cheap and easy way for the U.S. Congress to offer 'security' to the nation — especially when it was believed that we had a monopoly on nuclear know-how. The public is inclined, anyway, to leave complex and technical questions to those who are supposed to be 'the experts.' Then there is the 'denial mechanism' — that psychological phenomenon that leads people to close their minds to prospects too horrible to think about. And for those who did think about it, there was the force of habit that still lures people into perceiving nuclear weapons simply as overgrown conventional weapons. We have no experience for understanding an explosion that is brighter and hotter than the sun — that releases winds more violent than a hurricane — that can spread toxic poisons which produce genetic mutations beyond, say, the fifth generation of human victims. And so we tend to call this thing the 'greatest military weapon of all time' and pretend it is but the last chapter in a long story of ever-advancing military technology.

My own view, however, is that a major reason for postponing the great debate over nuclear policy is that the centerpiece of U.S. strategic thinking over the years has been the doctrine of deterrence — the notion that the role of nuclear weapons is not to prosecute wars at all but to deter anyone from starting one in the first place out of fear of certain retaliation. In its sophisticated formulations, the deterrence theory involves some wildly abstract speculations about mutual perceptions of the unknowable intentions of enemies in deep ignorance of each other. But in its simpler form the doctrine of deterrence offered certain moral comforts.

What's more, the deterrence theory can accommodate the notion of arms control as an essential element in national security policy and arms control negotiations as a central project in East-West relations. So, if one could believe that there is a reasonable chance of negotiating controls and eventually reductions in arsenals of weapons that were not really meant to be used in the first place, one could believe perhaps that there might be something, after all, in this notion of *Pax atomica*.

The point here about deterrence is simply that it was a strategic concept, coherent or not, that attempted to reconcile atomic arms with military traditions by looking at nuclear warheads as weapons and non-weapons at one and the same time. And this helped to obscure—or at least tempted people to ignore—the central paradox inherent in the fact that thermonuclear weapons offer literally unlimited destructive power. For, in the face of unlimited power, the critical relationship between military means and political ends disappears in thin air. The quintessential military concept of victory is dissolved into vapor. The concept of a balance of powers fades into fantasy. The mightiest weapons become dysfunctional *in military terms*. And the millennial search for national security turns back upon itself to reveal the central paradox of unlimited power posing unlimited danger to the nation and people it is supposed to protect...

Yet it is not enough just to turn away from one approach to national security — even for the compelling reason that the system has become counter-productive. For, until there is an alternative approach to security that is relevant to the modern world, the old concepts surely will continue to prevail as they have for the first decades of the nuclear age.

And it is precisely here that the atmosphere is most highly charged with tantalizing hints of impending breakthroughs in the way we look at the world and think about national security. Indeed, I now believe we may be on the verge of a conceptual revolution that will offer us an alternative worldview that is relevant to the contemporary world...

These perceptions of a unified planet supported by strategic global systems — of an indivisible human environment embracing both the works of man and the works of nature—and of a compound global predicament for the human race to resolve or face extinction: these have helped pave the way for the emergence of a new perception of national and world security.

There is much scattered evidence today of a restless search for a new concept of security. Questions are being asked that have not been heard before. Relationships are being explored that were not suspected a short time ago. Organizations are reaching out to each other in a rising awareness of shared concerns. Specifically, there is a move toward coalescence at the level of political action, of citizen groups interested in environment, development and disarmament.

This search for a new meaning of national security is perhaps best illustrated by reference to the publication this summer of the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues. This was a privately-supported international panel headed by Olof Palme, who since has been returned to his former post of Prime Minister of Sweden. This group studied the present world security problem for about two years with the help of expert consultants and witnesses.

There was one American and one Soviet member on the panel and several came from western and eastern Europe; others were from Asia, Africa and Latin America—all serving in their personal capacities rather than representing governments.

The Palme Commission made a substantial number of specific recommendations for nuclear and conventional arms control and disarmament measures—for regional security arrangements in all major areas of the world — for confidence-building of measures to reduce the prospect of war by accident or miscalculation — and for steps to strengthen the machinery of the United Nations for the resolution or containment or international conflict.. These recommendations reflected many of the best ideas that have been developed in the arms control field over the years.

The Commission made other contributions of a more basic nature to the analysis of peace and security in the nuclear age. For example it approached security not as a discrete subject but as part of the warp and woof of international political relations. It accepted the triangular relationship of security and environment and development. And the Commission insisted that security today is not just a problem for the major powers with nuclear arms but for the world as a whole — this in explicit reference to the fact that almost all of the wars of the past three decades have been fought in the Third World and with conventional weapons.

But, the most important contributions of the Commission were of a conceptual nature. For one thing, the Palme Commission confirmed the failure of the long effort to reconcile nuclear power with political-military traditions. In a prologue to the U.S. edition of the report, former Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance — the American member of the Commission — writes 'There is one overriding truth in this nuclear age — no nation can achieve true security by itself.'

That statement, of course, stands the political-military tradition on its

head — and that is the tradition that most governments still live by today. Vance is saying that the governments of the nuclear powers can no longer provide with their own resources the physical security that is the first thing the citizen expects from national governments. He is saying that security and the perception of security is based on what is today a false premise. He is saying that national security based on the strength of nuclear weapons is, in fact, a contradiction in terms. In other words, President Truman was right thirty-some years ago when he found nuclear power too revolutionary for old ideas.

For another thing, the Palme Commission rejects the search for some quick fix to the problem of war and peace in the nuclear age. Security measures, it says, 'must be tailored to the realities of political and military circumstances in specific situations.' For, steps toward disarmament have universal relevance and fewer still, in the opinion of the Commission, are feasible at a given time in all parts of the world.

More pointedly, the Palme Commission rejects the fix of a supranational institution and accepts implicitly that nuclear power must co-exist with the nation-State. And for good reason: the whole political history of the post-war world has moved decisively in the opposite direction, from supranational government. A handful of empires have split into a hundred nations; and separatism haunts long-established States.

Like it or not, nationalism is one of the most powerful political forces on earth. Nationalism is the political expression of a basic human urge for group identity; it is the protector of cultural diversity and of the 'right to be different.' What we have to get rid of, then, is not the nation, but the dangerous delusion that any nation can cope independently with the priority problems of the modern world.

Finally, the Palme Commission offers a concept of security that is relevant to real-world conditions in the 1980s. In his prologue, Vance writes: 'To guarantee our own secu-

rity we must work together with other nations to achieve common security for security in the nuclear age means common security. This has been the central conclusion of our Commission'. And this was the title given to the Commission's report, *Common Security*.

My point here is that a perception of the need for common security is relevant to the political structure of the world we live in today. For, this is not only the 'post-war' world in which the superpowers compete at the accumulation of unusable weapons for unwinnable wars. This also is the *post-colonial* world of 150-odd sovereign States — a pluralistic world with many centers of power in which no nation can exercise decisive influence and in which the practice of power politics increasingly looks like a loser's game.

A perception of the need for common security is relevant, as well, to the economic structure of the world we live in today. For, this is an *interdependent* world — not only in terms of expanded exchanges of goods and money and people, but because we mutually depend upon the daily functioning of integrated economic and technical systems and services that have become a kind of metabolism for the body politic of the society of nations. The reliable performance of these global systems is vital to the everyday life of nations — and hence vital to their national security.

And a need for common security is, of course, relevant to the ecological realities of the present world predicament. For how, in the name of God, can we even talk about national security when the global commons and the basic biological systems are under threat — when, that is, the planet itself is insecure and under rising risks from year to year?

So from the Palme Commission and many other sources we begin to get a concept of national security through world security — a concept that is consistent with the perception of unified natural systems, with an indivisible human environment and with a global predicament for mankind. This emergent perception

of common security can be reconciled — not with the 19th century conditions that gave birth to the geo-political worldview — but with the conditions that shape life on earth in this second half of the 20th century.

Iwould argue, then, that changing perceptions of national and world security lead to two conclusions:

First, the struggle for liberation from the conceptual trap of geopolitical tradition that began at the dawn of the nuclear age — only to relapse for several decades — is now gaining strength at a rapid rate and may well be the most important political phenomenon of our times. We may be very close to the crucial day when it becomes good politics to support the idea that peace can, and must, become the normal state in the relationship of nation to nation. And it is up to the citizenry to bring that day to pass.

Second, we may be close to the formulation of a modern concept of national security through world security — a perception that is relevant to the dominant political, economic, ecological, and other conditions of the contemporary world. This conceptual breakthrough is being facilitated, I believe, by a coalitance of ideas and interests, especially among private groups active in support of development, environment and disarmament.

Once we begin to explore seriously the concept of world security, liberation from the traps of tradition should follow swiftly. For, the perception that national security is embedded irretrievably in world security is potentially more exciting than world government — or any utopia based on shared values. For, it means that in the real world today the national interests of the separate States converge in the need to defend and sustain the living systems of planet earth — and that includes us. Which is to say that the only way to save our own skins is to make the earth secure. And so world security is a policy for pragmatists — and for poets too. If offers a strategy suitable for saints — and for soldiers as well.

A comment

RAVI SHANKAR

A WEEK before he died, Leonid Brezhnev gave his last speech. In it he verbalised the uneasy and precarious superpower equation by threatening a mighty retaliation against the United States in the event of a nuclear war. He warned the enemy not to underestimate the Soviet Union's military might, a total of 8040 ICBMs capable of a destructive mega-death potential of 3505 megatons*, in addition to a host of other weapons, thus invoking a Nostradamic version of hellfire. A few weeks later the Soviets announced their intention to develop their own version of the MX missile, as a cold war answer to President's Reagan's efforts to remove 'Moscow's margin of superiority'. In spite of his Senate debacle over the MX, Reagan plans to go ahead with his defence budget of \$ 240 billion invested in B-1 Bombers, MX missiles and others. A declaration of war on the part of the US would activate 9480 war-heads unleashing 3505 megatons. When the first N-Bomb was detonated thirty seven years ago a horrified Oppenheimer invoked the Hindu scriptures — of Vishnu in his apocalyptic incarnation, I am become death, the destroyer of both the worlds!

These are no new manifestations of evil. The history of genocides goes back a long way and the explanations are many, but one concurrent theme that has been incarnated from the Crusadic era to the cold war is the concept of the 'enemy'. Humanity it seems cannot exist without the enemy.

What is the enemy? The enemy in reality does not exist except theologically—a way of understanding nature in terms of good and evil. So in the contemporary ethos, in an ideal society the enemy does not, or at least should not, exist at all, in the paradoxical sense that an absolutely ethical government or political system does not exist. The Saracen and the Christian, the Jew and

the Arab are microcosms of irrational human conflicts and therefore are not the creation of the individual mind nor the ethical mind. These are through generations of power, spanning through centuries suggested into the social way of thought, subtly creating an eternal fear psychosis. No army can stop an idea whose time has come, wrote Victor Hugo. The idea dawned millennia ago, inversely creating armies. And these armies fulfilled their destructive 'karma', and continue to do so, because the army is the bulwark of the State.

An understanding of the State has been the dominant need of post-Industrial Revolution philosophers and political scientists. But in the context of the peculiar relationship of the State and the enemy, I wonder if an understanding of it as a definitive objective idea would help, (like the Marrian or Liberal interpretation of the State, or even Ortega Y' Gasset's suggestion of the State having evolved as the result of a decadent nobility). Because the army is the most important organ of the State, enabling its survival by constantly anticipating, repelling and also invading the enemy, it is important to understand this particular aspect of the State for the very army can be used by the State against its own peoples.

Fundamentally, it is merely as a primordial perception of power that the State exists in man's mind, judging all his private and public actions. It decides his way of life, his rituals and contributions and, above all, his power over others. It even allows criticism and liberal opinion within its limits, according to how civilised the society is, thus subtly insuring its sanction by assuring the critic of his freedom. Thus, it makes decisions for the individual, at times even carrying them out for him, as head of the human family and, ultimately, makes the most powerful decision—that of the threat to his security.

*1 megaton=1 million tons of TNT.

When the State has gained the power to determine the threat to a society, it can have assumed to have obtained complete control over that society. *The State is the mechanism that can make nations go to war.*

And for war, you need an enemy. So the enemy is the creation of the State. Without an enemy the State cannot subsist because the purpose of the State is power. And the enemy is the State's well-spring of power. But here the relationship of the enemy and the State is an internecine one, both destroying one another, the logical culmination of which would perhaps be the end of the earth. In such a situation of confrontation, societies are plunged into a war of ideologies where the liberal is constrained to choose sides. This is the most dangerous psychic consequence of the State-Enemy relationship whereby the liberal intellect may mistake the freedoms his manifestation of the State allow him for true liberty, and thus will enable the State to gain power over the minds of men.

The protagonists of the State are the enemy and the leader. The leader is also the product of the State, where the enemy is its prodigal offspring. The relationship of the leader and the State is almost an Oedipal one, being both child and master. Kissinger said — power is the ultimate aphrodisiac ... Power is the lovechild of the leader and the State, spoilt with a will of its own. There are Freudian undertones of a universal libido, with the State in quest of never ending orgiastic appeasement. The orgasms follow in an insatiable frenzy — genocides, pogroms, racial massacres, invasions and conquests. There are also the more 'refined' forms of these perverse results like the exploitation of men and raw materials by international cartels, the hidden underworld links of mafia-government links, (American newspapers surfaced with news of the mafia connections of John. F. Kennedy, Frank Sinatra, to name a few. The Indian politician's connections with the criminal world is no new theme, what with dacoits as election managers) and the intricate network of intelligence agencies

plotting and overthrowing governments and infiltrating the highest places.

This primary equation, i.e., the leader versus the enemy has continued through the generations. Whenever there was political power to consolidate, the State used this equation to its optimum. In the Crusadic era, the Church more or less took on a State identity, making religion serve the power-instincts of the State. 'If it is in view of a child, a man and a woman are brought together,' Giovanni Baldelli writes, 'if it is in view of an enemy the many coalesce into a mass and follow the leader. In order to keep the bond the presence of an enemy must be constantly felt, *and if it doesn't exist it must be created.*' Since the base of leadership is emotion and not reason, the individual is converted into the *mass-man*. There is a transcendental miracle over quantity whereby the mass-man finds himself in direct communion with the leader, thus personalising the relationship and starts perceiving his fellow partymen as an extension of himself — the magic of power, this unswallowable enormous wafer of his covenant with the leader's power, by a psychological miracle transforms the leader into an extension of the mass-man himself! Giovanni Baldelli, the well known Social Anarchist offers a clear insight into this ominous relationship, 'The mass man exerts all times a degrading influence and is potentially murderous because... theories evolved to rationalise leadership by demonstrating that the individual has no rights and no values are by the mass-man to apply to others, *and never to himself!*'

Leadership of ideology can also, in a sense, create 'enemy-fuel'. In fact, it is the total effect of these subtle battles that could very well be the prelude to a third world war. Communism versus capitalism is a prominent example. The respective State machines can be compared to exceedingly large orchestras conducting an intricate and elaborate composition towards a final and thunderous climax — imagine the countless instruments each has and how they affect their societies through various mediums like text books, journals — and newspapers,

literature, art, museums, food and political pronouncements which all in the end seem to point to the complete justification of one activity — the creation of the horrible military monsters that may well prove to be the Frankensteins of tomorrow.

Ever since the beginning, mankind has not travelled alone, being forever pursued by the poisonous shadow of the unseen, unfelt and universal enemy, which compells it with each step closer and closer to the precipice. Man's basic instinct is that of self preservation. The destruction of the earth, writes Jonathan Schell, or the mutilation of any part of it touches a deep cord in our nature. What is this force that negates this instinctive biological law and dictates him towards annihilation? Is it the State?

It seems so. Mankind cannot destroy the enemy, for if it does so the State will be destroyed itself! For the preservation of the State, the earth could be a considered casualty.

But, without the earth, and without a man and society which has a will to hate that is unshadowed by the eventual consequence of a global war, even then will the State exist? The answer is NO! And this fundamental knowledge goes against the rationale of the State's existence and its functional intent, because the State in its undying quest for power has gone out of its own control. The power-capital accumulated through the medium of the enemy, has grown out of proportion to the controlling institutions of the State and has become an entity by itself. And power does not need assent. Where the human element present in the State gives it a semblance of conscience, the entity of power does not have even that. Man using power for his ends was the era of yesterday; now power uses man. It is on the brink of this bottomless pit of horror that the human race stands today with this insane companion, this new separate entity of power which will one day attain sufficient proportions of vertigo to plunge downwards, taking man with it.

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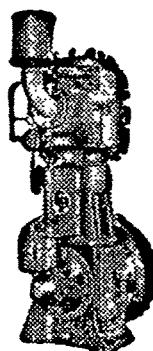
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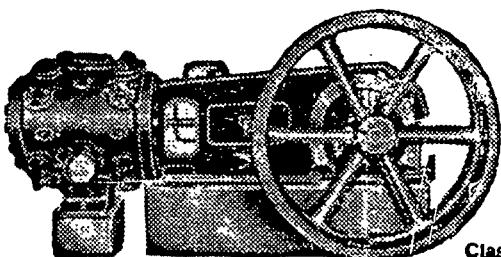
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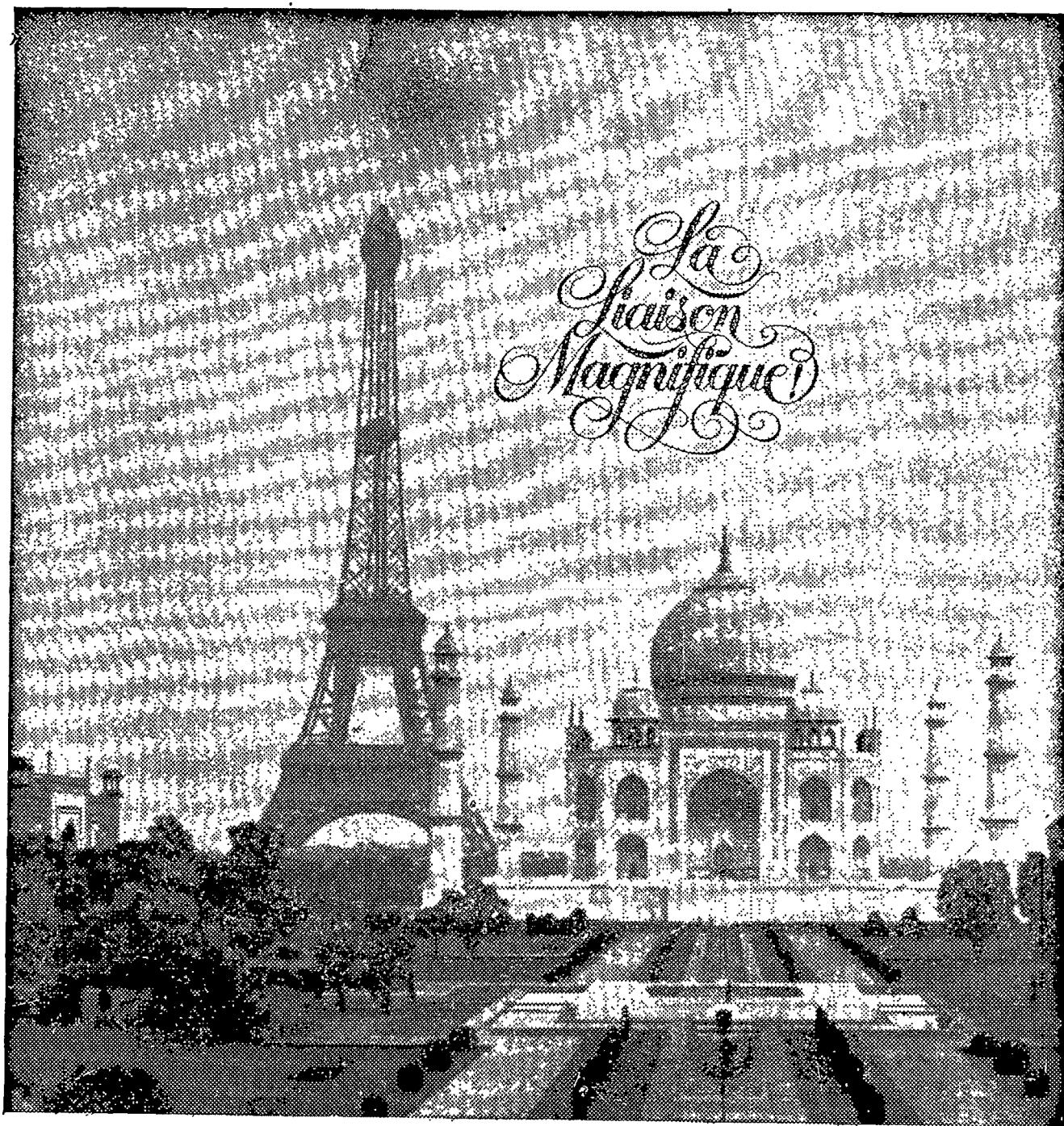
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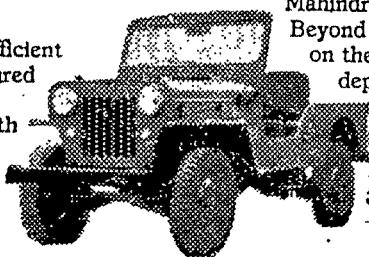
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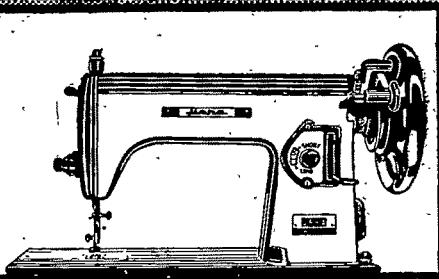


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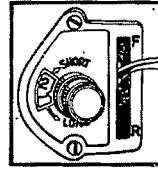
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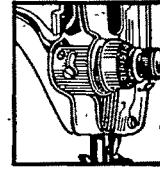
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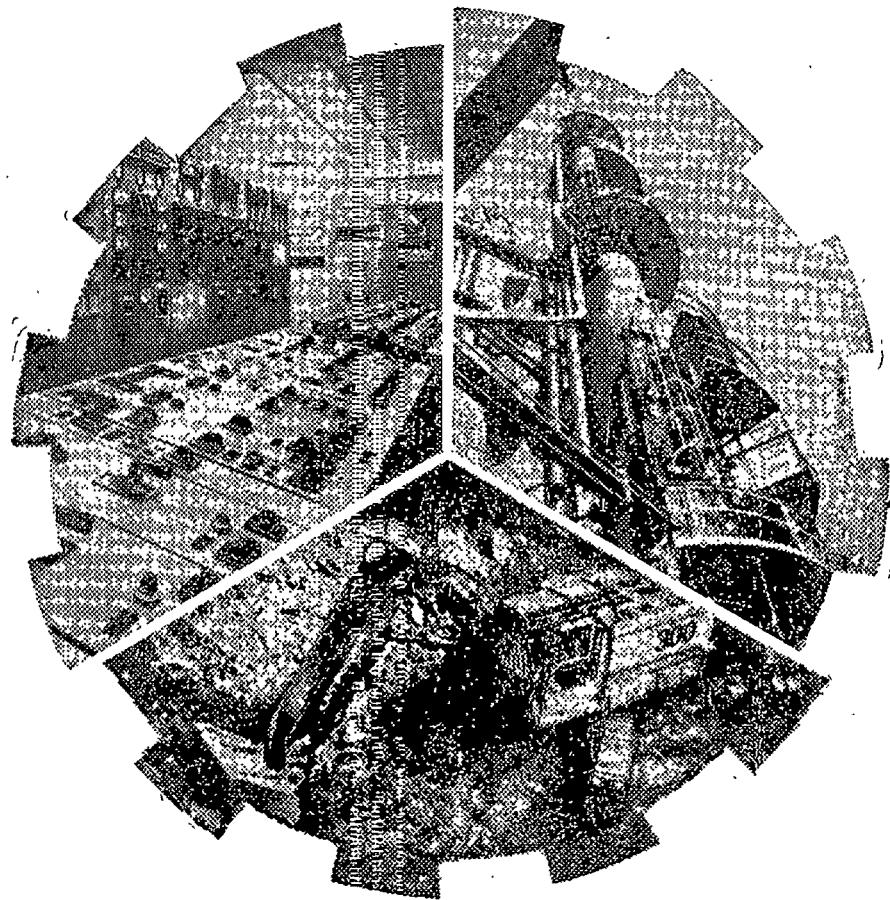
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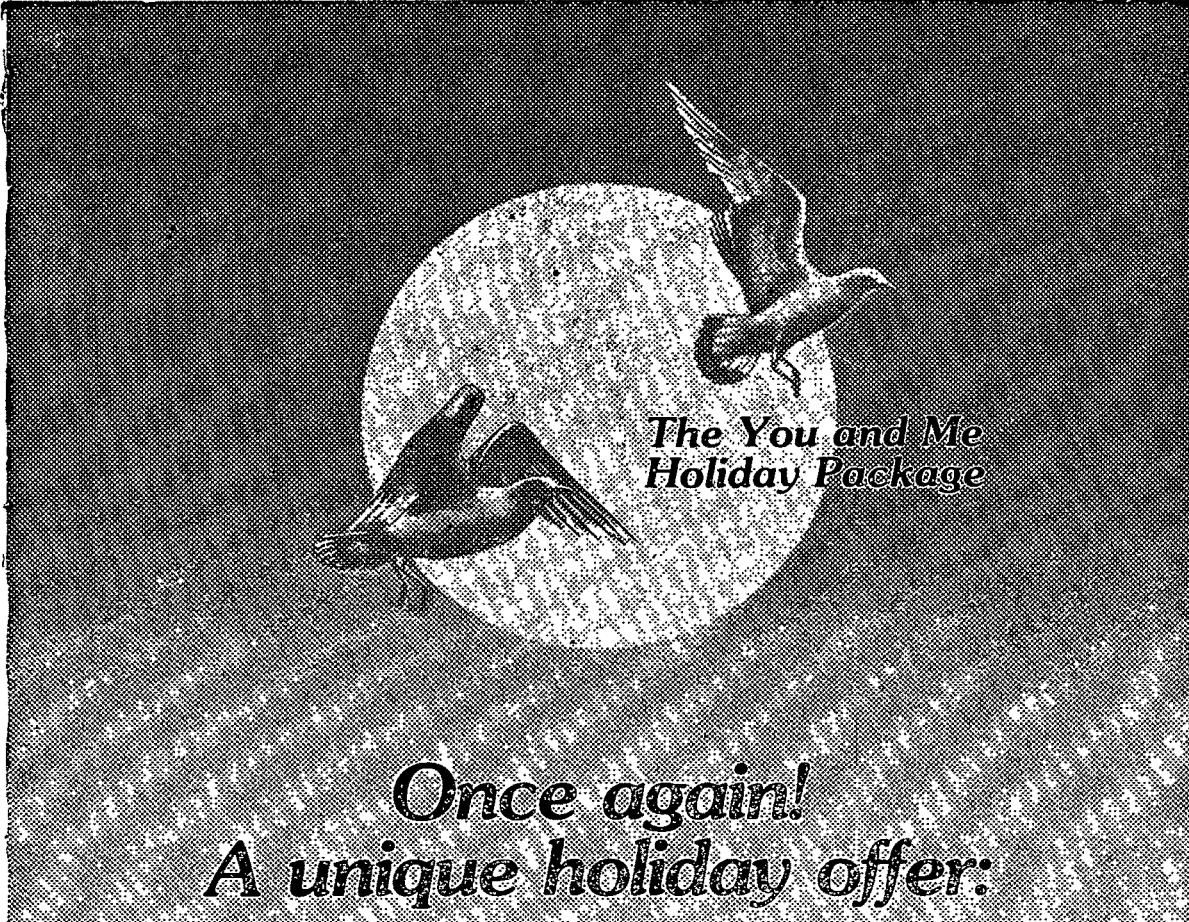
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FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY



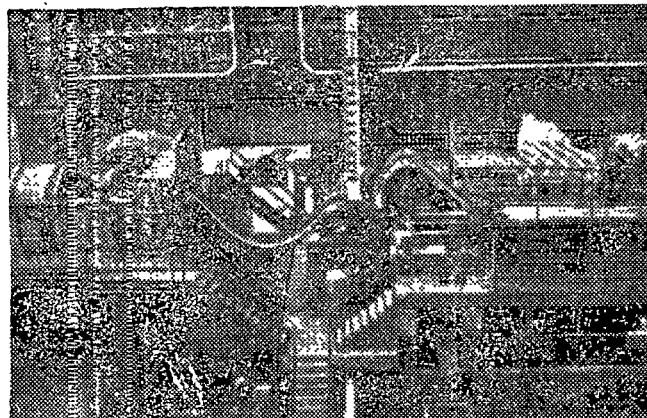
General view of the Cold Rolling Mill complex with the balancing reservoir in the foreground

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Annealing and Pickling Line No. 1—Stainless strip under processing

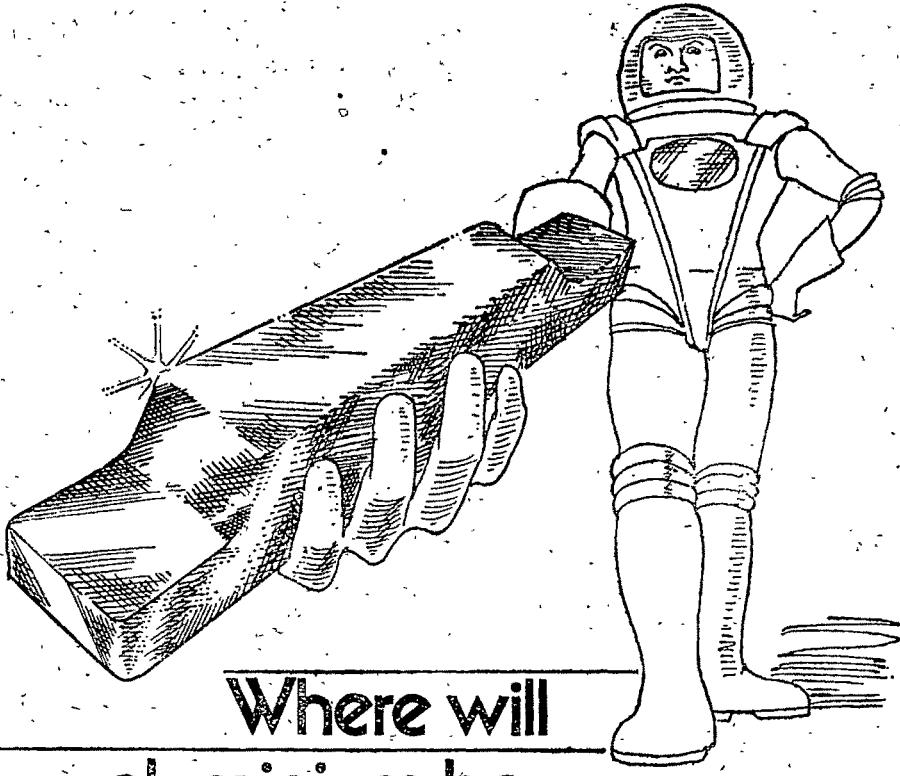
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COVER

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The problem

THERE is something seriously wrong with the framework in which we normally discuss Indian politics. It is too heavily influenced by the democratic model of the West, particularly the Anglo-Saxon part of it. The model, now threatened with a breakdown under the political crises of the West, is certainly inappropriate for a complex, multi-cultural/national sub-continent and looks rather tattered and untidy under the present disarray in our political life.

Our obsession with the frame of the model prevents us from opening our minds to the many democratic alternatives available to us, alternatives that have been tested successfully in several countries. Proportional representation and voting on party lists composed of those with recognised credibility. The elimination of splinter formations by denying recognition to those polling less than the stipulated minimum vote. State funding of election expenses to reduce dependence on dubious financing. The gradual elimination of the corruption known as electioneering.

The acceptance of alternatives would free discussion on the relevance of regional formations, the dimensions of a federal party culture, the role of coalitions, the possibility of various levels of governance in a continental party, and the potential inherent in zonal coordinations. We seldom stray beyond the simplistic two-party system of the Anglo-Saxons,

for fear that we might be inviting political chaos.

To understand the transitions we are making, I suppose we need more carefully to understand the phenomenon of the Congress Party. It was originally a getting together of an amorphous bunch of thoughts and trends, cemented by the urge for freedom from colonial rule. The patchwork quilt of the 'Indian Empire' had assumed a certain fusion, and this was sought to be reflected politically. The sweep of the freedom struggle helped to dissolve the complexities and contradictions, and the genius of Gandhi was to make us sensitive to the many forgotten facets of our land.

But even as Gandhi set about transforming the elitist Indian National Congress into an instrument of mass action — nurturing his political-philosophic concepts in the conflicts and cohesions of the sub-continent and linking them to the liberal conscience of Britain — he failed to comprehend the growing Muslim fear of 'former rulers' being reduced to a 'permanent minority'. This could be described as a fogging caused by an unthinking Hinduism. But, in fact, it was in a sense our failure fully to face all the implications of the multi-cultural/national dimension of our continental politics.

This failure slowly distorted Muslim consciousness and prepared the way to partition. We run away from this by saying that the Muslims were not a

nation. True. But twisted understanding leads to twisted results. Even the confused Indian communists for a while became devotees of a Muslim homeland. The multi-cultural dimension embraces quiet national stirrings. We neglect them to our cost. A multi-cultural/national Pakistan, torn into two, is a spectacular example — for it still fails to teach a lesson to its unthinking Punjabi militarists.

Tragedy climaxed the freedom struggle even though the Congress Party throughout the tempestuous years of its growth was emphasising its consciousness about cultural/linguistic identities. Resolution upon resolution bears this out. But no consistent political framework was evolved in time to reassure various segments about their future. The greater sensitivity resulting from the partition was, however, to restore a certain balance in thinking among those who were inclined to establish a political monolithicism in India.

The reorganisation of the States of the Indian Union, soon after the complicated absorption of princely India, and in the face of considerable opposition, certainly helped to defuse the situation in the early days of our freedom — and might well have provided a fairly permanent answer for healthy federal functioning had a responsive and creative socialist society come into being riding over the interests of elites, continental and regional. But this was not to be.

After 35 years of freedom, we have established a capitalist State. We are reluctant to say so categorically, or to recognise the implications of such a development. This capitalism is wrapped up in socialist control honoured only in the breach, and served by a public sector which long ago gave up the Nehru dream of commanding the heights of the economy. And, inevitably, the contradictions so spawned are building a parallel black money economy which is terribly destructive of the notions of a just society.

This capitalist growth, registered and unregistered, has a direct bearing on political assertion in the cultural/linguistic national regions, call them what you will. Regional elites grow and demand economic opportunities equal to those operating continentally. A large slice of resources and development is sought. The Congress culture, congealed by corrupt continental capitalist interests, sees the growing regional assertion as a threat. The sub-conscious fears about 'balkanisation' are played up. The theme of central cohesion is repeated *ad nauseum*. The commitment to genuine consensus techniques is eroded. A continental party is reduced to the plaything of a leader. Dynasty-making takes over as the answer to an uncertain future.

cal formations from enjoying even a fraction of power in the sub-continent is paralleled by the destruction or erosion of the institutions supporting the federal structure. The massive use of unaccounted money, the raising of servitor politicians in the regions, the failure of the national opposition parties to present any exciting alternative, or even a semblance of possible continuities with a still remembered political past, creates a profound vacuum.

When Nehru ruled, he was basically the captain of a powerful and vigorous formation embracing a variety of regional aspirations. These aspirations were carefully moderated — and there was always a concern to establish institutions to strengthen and enrich federal functioning. In other words, the regional leaderships were very pronounced in their presence. These healthy traditions were destroyed after the 1969 split in the Congress Party.

The electoral swings of 1971, the Emergency, 1977 and 1980 must be studied against this background. While the desire for credible government was overwhelming — yes, even to the extent of providing massive mandates — the political exercises yielded repetitive and empty pledges on performance and problem-solving. The Janata debacle, in fact, put the lid on the two party dream of India's political imitators. The rise of what we call 'regionalism', prevalent in the past, and even influencing the growth of the communist formations, is now very apparent. Its assertion is actually an act of self-preservation when the old, corrupt and highly centralised political order is collapsing and nothing emerges as a sensitive alternative.

I believe that increasingly regional assertions will occur, initially as acts of self-preservation, but designed to fit into a federal frame. The DMK/AIADMK dominance in Tamilnadu, the traditional power of the National Conference in Kashmir and the Bengali or Malayalam bases of the CPI(M) will be matched by the living legend of the Telugu Desham in Andhra Pradesh and the Kranti Ranga flavouring in Karnataka. Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan are not far behind in their search for regional expression.

Regionalism, more effective in its closeness to local problems, is bound by its very nature to seek a decentralisation of power and a more purposeful interpretation of federal functioning, together with a more active interest in the restoration of the institutions and the norms which give health to our polity. In this way, it will seek a meaningful linkage with a continental political culture. In other words, the supposed contradiction between regionalism and continentalism is artificial — as yet. And will remain so even when the inevitable demand for smaller, more homogenous States takes shape.

A doubt exists only to the extent that we might fail to see the irrelevance of the existing political model and heighten the bankruptcy of continental

parties to such an extent that healthy federal functioning becomes problematical. Under the guiding hand of Jawaharlal Nehru, we established three foundations for our federal polity: democracy, secularism and socialism. Nehru knew that we were not devotees of any of these concepts. Quite the contrary. But how could the sprawling sub-continent of India survive without these three foundations?

So we talked about them endlessly, even implemented some notions which could be described as democratic, secular and socialistic. But we were never really serious as a people about these strategic objectives. They became the sophisticated cover for all manner of skullduggery. And let us not bluff ourselves that this is a recent phenomenon. The roots stretch way back.

If we are concerned about national disarray and disintegration, it is around these central issues that the debate must flow. It is here that we need to stir up some revivalism, reassessment and reform. This complex sub-continent is sought to be ruled from a single point of power, and by a single family. The very concept is stupid. But how many go along with it. It is a kind of desperate acceptance. No alternative is thrashed out by those who still have credibility — an alternative based on a decentralised democratic system, a more authentic secular way of life and an economic society firmly grounded in priorities which ensure social justice.

The old Congress culture, embracing the regions, respecting them, has to be replaced by a new continental culture, based either on a *meaningful* socialism or a *healthy* nationalism. Why? Because the complexity of India defies extremism of all kinds. It demands the forging of a federal framework on the basis of a creative consensus, opposed to the aberrations of monolithicism, personality cults and authoritarianism. Admittedly, the edge of regionalism is blunted under a socialist culture because ambitious elites lose their sway, but under a national culture this problem would need to be tackled with greater skill. Competing continental cultures will have to go through many profound mutations to become relevant and to link to the continuities of democracy, secularity and social justice — yes, even within the capitalist State that is India today.

A delay in this flowering is dangerous as it makes regional consolidations impatient, but so long as the continental parties understand what is happening, the transitions can take place without disruption. In this way, we will move to a new frame of politics. We don't have much time at our disposal. One positive result of 35 years of development is that we are thinking more cogently on our condition. We have to texture for a society of 1000 millions. An awesome task which in physical terms makes a mockery of imitative models. I believe that we now have the resources and the skills to tackle our problems. We have only to generate the will to act.

Diversities in our politics

ARUN BOSE

UNTIL about a few months ago, Indian politics seemed to be orienting definitely, though not very strongly, crawling rather than marching, towards what can be called full-fledged political monocentrism, i.e., towards a centralised direction from a single centre. In this orientation, a key role was played by the Congress(I), whose politics of personalised monocentrism must not be confused, as it too often is, with monolithic politics (of a kind practised to a fault by, say, Charan Singh of the Lok Dal). For, the Congress(I) thrives on, even encourages, more and more, and cold-bloodedly rather than impulsively, political *indiscipline* within its ranks, subject to two crucial provisos. First, the political indiscipline must stop at the threshold of the ultimate (and final) source of monocentric political

power; second, it must justify itself by expanding the mass base of the party by 'internalising' a part of the opposition from without, so as to steal the thunder of the remainder of the opposition. (By contrast, a strictly monolithic party tolerates no internal indiscipline or external opposition, except, perhaps, a submissive 'loyal' opposition).

Now, up to about three months ago, the monocentric politics of the Congress(I) was gaining ground. First, through well-timed State-level elections, synchromeshed with successful pre-election manoeuvres to isolate the communist Left, it made inroads of varying depth and durability into the three somewhat cornered regional bastions on the periphery of Indian politics of the all-India Left and anti-monocentric

centrist parties in India, viz., in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura.

Second, gambling on 'calculated indiscipline', deliberately promoted within the party to pre-empt external opposition, the Congress(I) retained control over Haryana, one of the three nuclei of caste-based monocentric politics under the hegemony of the Jat caste in north-western India (which at one time extended from West Punjab, now Pakistan, in the West, to western Uttar Pradesh). It did so by receiving waves of defectors from centrist, and some leftist anti-Congress(I) parties and factions to establish and consolidate this base.

The Congress(I) followed up these two gains by making an opening, if not yet an inroad, into older and stronger bastions of regional politics in the north, north-west and the south. It did this by converting the indirect election (by an electoral college consisting of elected and nominated legislators at the centre and the States) of the President of India, into an instrument of realignment of all-India politics. The promise, or mischief, of such realignment was clinched when support for the Congress(I) nominee for the presidential post, Zail Singh, drawn from the Sikh community, was secured from *all* the clashing factions within the Sikh Akali Dal, as well as the two feuding factions of the Kashmir National Conference, and from both the AIADMK and the DMK in Tamil Nadu (both of which had allied with, and jilted, or been jilted by, the Congress(I) more than once, and between them have established a monopoly of Tamil Nadu politics). Occurring at a time when the first ripples of an Akali-led Sikh political upheaval in the Punjab were already visible, this episodic Congress(I)-Akali rapprochement was quickly followed up by Congress(I) overtures for a merger of the Akalis with the Congress(I) in the Punjab or for a Congress(I)-Akali coalition ministry in the Punjab as a first step.

At the same time, up to about three months ago, the Congress(I) was maintaining successfully sometimes a toe-hold, sometimes a foot-hold, in the shifting quick-sands of north-eastern regional politics, from

Sikkim to Arunachal and Nagaland in the far north to Assam on the southern rim, the epi-centre of India's political earthquake of the nineteen-seventies (and perhaps of the nineteen-eighties too).

In the process, the Congress(I) was perhaps burning its fingers by trying to eliminate in the north-east, simultaneously, the receding presence of the anti-Congress(I) centrist (Janata and Congress S) factions, the growing presence of the anti-Congress(I) Left (the Communist Party (Marxist) in particular), and the token presence of the anti-Congress(I) Right (i.e., the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSSS)). But, it was able to some extent to paint the communist Left in the colours of dominating, successful, Bengali communist-led irredentism in Tripura, and frustrated minority Bengali communist-led irredentism in Assam, perhaps reducing further the political appeal of the communist Left outside its entrenched regional bases in West Bengal and Tripura, while deepening it within these bases.

Moreover, the Congress(I) also made overtures to the leaders of the Assam movement not only during negotiations to settle the 'foreigners' issue', but also in rumoured attempts to 'internalise' the Assam movement by an agreement for an election in Assam in which there would be joint lists for the division of all (or most) seats between the Congress(I) and the leaders of the Assam movement.

In the scenario sketched above, there was a sea-change, sudden and drastic, which reversed the trend towards monocentrism. There is now a definite and very strong tilt towards regional polycentrism of varying strength, varying degrees, and varying directions.

The change was unexpectedly but conclusively established by the Telugu Desam's electoral victory in Andhra Pradesh, which had been somewhat recklessly turned into a plebiscite for or against monocentric politics centred in Delhi by the Congress(I). In this 'plebiscitary election', the monocentrism of the Congress(I) within the party appa-

ratus, as well as with respect to the relations between the central and State government, was rejected as decisively as it was rejected in Tamil Nadu many years ago, when it came under the sway of, at first a single-party, and then a two-party system of anti-Brahmin DMK political subculture.

The parallel elections in Karnataka produced a less conclusive outcome. The Congress(I) survived as the largest single party in the legislature, but lost the majority to a regional Kranti Ranga-Janata Party coalition. Through this coalition, which was quickly followed by a merger of the Kranti Ranga (of dissident Congress(I) members led by the loyalist-turned-dissident Congress(I) regional leader Devraj Urs) with the somewhat nomadic Janata Party, the latter has re-emerged as a regional party after a spell in the political wilderness where it was like a political soul in search of a body to breathe life into.

Of course, the regional polycentric challenges from Andhra and Karnataka are moderate in the sense that a minimal shift in the direction of 'federalisation' of Indian politics, with enhanced status for the States, and some greater devolution of powers and resources, political and economic, is all that is demanded by the Telugu Desam and a regionalised Janata Party based in Karnataka. Broadly, this is also what is demanded by the AIADMK ministry and the DMK opposition in Tamil Nadu, as well as the communist-led Left front in West Bengal and Tripura (and Kerala) for many years (except that these parties insist on constitutional changes to ensure this federalisation, and some of them want the centre to be very strong in Assam but not so strong anywhere else).

By contrast, in the present phase, the leaders of the stepped-up Akali morcha (neglecting, as not yet serious, the Khalistan demand of the Dal Khalsa faction for an internationally recognised buffer State between India and Pakistan) as well as of the three-year-old Assam movement, are demanding 'confederalisation' of Indian politics, though with such different aims as to make

it difficult to grasp this essence of their demands.

Thus, the spokesmen of the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) and their partners, the Gana Sangram Parishad (GSP) demand an internally 'sovereign' Assam joined in a confederation with the rest of India, which 'residual' India, however, is to be ruled by a 'strong', preferably unitary centre. This all-India centre should be a 'weak' confederal centre vis-a-vis an internally 'sovereign' Assam, with its powers limited to the subjects of defence, external affairs, communications and currency. But this same all-India centre should be a 'strong', more 'unitary' than 'federal', centre vis-a-vis most or all other Indian States, strong enough to force them to accept 'foreigners' (if not all 'outsiders') expelled from Assam. Thirdly, the all-India centre should be strong enough externally against Bangladesh to halt emigration from Bangladesh to Assam, and force it to take back some of its emigres already in Assam.

On the other hand, the accredited leaders of the Akali morcha are making the comparatively more stereo-typed and straightforward demand for an Indian confederation with an internally 'weak' but externally 'strong' centre (in charge of defence, communications and foreign affairs and perhaps currency). There is the rider, however, that the external strength of the all-India confederal centre should be enhanced by ensuring greater representation of Sikhs in the Indian armed forces than in proportion to their status as a demographic minority, in recognition of their martial ethos and greater physical fitness as fighting material, compared to recruits from most other States.

To summarise: both the Akali and the Assam movement leaders are demanding changes to establish an externally strong, confederal, all-India centre, having under it two classes of Indian States: some *strong* vis-a-vis the confederal centre (and the 'weak' States), and others weak vis-a-vis the centre (and the 'strong' States).

The regionalised polycentric challenge also has an important

economic dimension. In the demands being raised by both the 'federalisers' and the 'confederalisers', there are elements of a demand for turning India into something resembling economic 'common market' and investment areas (such as exist in the west European OEEC or the east European COMECON), as the economic counterpart of a proposed 'loose' political federation or confederation.

This is to take the place of India as a single, unified 'free trade and investment area' subject to restrictions on movement of resources imposed by the central government, which are mostly uniform for the whole country at present (and have recently been extended to include Kashmir and Sikkim).

Of course, restrictions on the purchase of land by non-Kashmiris in Kashmir (whether they are Indian citizens or not), preferences in employment for 'mulkis' or 'sons of the soil' in the Telengana sub-region in Andhra Pradesh, are the best known examples of the common market type of arrangement in India. They are exceptional so far, but need not remain exceptional if some of the demands being made now are conceded and set the general pattern.

Thus, the AIADMK ministry of Tamil Nadu has been insisting on Tamil Nadu's right, as a marginally surplus State in food-grains' production in normal years, to procure and export food-grains outside India. But this year it is also claiming an enlarged share in supplies from the centrally-procured food-grains' all-India buffer stock, although it has refused to join the all-India food-grains' pool.

The newly-formed Telugu Desam ministry in Andhra Pradesh is claiming its right to divert temple trust funds from the nationalised banks to its own coffers, and also to secure investment by emigre Andhras outside India in Andhra Pradesh, as well as central government funds for a steel project in Andhra Pradesh. West Bengal's Left front ministry, in staking its claim to a

larger share of income-tax collected by the central government in West Bengal territory is also beginning to argue in favour of a common-market type of arrangement.

On the other hand, some of the economic demands now being made with reference to a restructuring of centre-State economic relations do not necessarily require common-market type of arrangements but a 'free trade and investment area' for the whole country. Thus, there is a hint in the West Bengal ministry's memorandum recently announced that freight and price policies of the centre with respect to coal and steel have deprived West Bengal and Bihar and other coal-and-iron-rich resources of their comparative advantage. If the matter is pursued, the least that is required is that there should be free market prices in coal and steel, or that any controls should be left to be settled by common-market type of arrangements between producing and consuming State governments.

However, one thing is clear. The demand for a restructuring of centre-State economic relations is now universal and irresistible. The re-structuring that is demanded mostly involves a diminished economic role of the centre and enhanced role of the States, at least the economically strong States. Thus, the West Bengal Left front is demanding effective economic planning for the whole country by the National Development Council (which has so far had a shadowy existence) rather than by the Prime Minister's office, the central finance ministry acting in consultation with the IMF as at present.

It has also been staking a claim on behalf of all the States to foreign aid received by the central government, and also to the quantum of deficit-financing endorsed by the Reserve Bank of India. It has also been demanding that 75% of total revenue from all sources accruing to the centre should be disbursed to the States, and that 100% of all income-tax collected by the centre should be allocated to the States.

It is to be noted that these demands, if conceded and to the

extent that they are conceded, diminish the role of the centre in the utilisation of total resources available to the State agencies, but not to its role in the collection of resources. In fact, the Left front ministry of Tripura goes further and wants the centre to be a strong revenue-collector, and also a strong revenue-allocator which, however, ensures a significant transfer of resources collected by State agencies from the centre and the economically strong States to the economically weaker ones.

A further indication that hardly anyone is demanding an economically 'weak' centre all along the line, and in all respects, is provided by the desire of the Telugu Desam ministry, and perhaps the AIADMK ministry of Tamil Nadu, and the Kranti Ranga-Janata ministry of Karnataka that the centre should take over the management of the entire electricity supply industry in the country, and also that it should nationalise inland riverine transport systems.

Like the economic dimensions of the regionalised polycentric challenges, there are major international implications of the challenges which are, like the economic implications, mostly in conflict with each other.

Thus, the Kashmir National Conference insisted on passing the Resettlement Act to permit immigration from Pakistan-held Kashmir, and this was an issue in the Jammu and Kashmir election campaign this summer. It is claimed that so far, six months after the Act was passed, no immigrant has applied for resettlement under the provisions of the Act. But if, and when, they do, such immigrants (who will be Muslim refugees from Pakistan under martial law) will further tilt the Hindu-Muslim demographic balance in favour of the Muslims in Kashmir valley, as well as in the State of Jammu and Kashmir as a whole. This is especially likely when, as already noted earlier, there is a restriction on immigration into the State of Jammu and Kashmir from the rest of India through restrictions on transfer of land to such 'outsiders'.

In partial contrast to the Kashmir National Conference's stand on this 'foreigners' issue, the Assam movement leaders demand detection, disenfranchisement and deportation of immigrants from Bangladesh and erstwhile East Pakistan, both Muslim and Hindu (but at least the Muslims), if not of all 'outsiders' from pre-independence Bengal.

The aim is to tilt the demographic balance in favour of the Assamese, but its implication seems to be to tilt the demographic balance in favour of the Assamese Hindus. For, the activists of the Assam movement have rejected as *mala fide* the decision of an undefined number of Bengali Muslim immigrants from erstwhile East Pakistan or Bangladesh to choose Assamese as the medium of education for their children.

The last point just made brings out the odd mixture of similarities as well as contrasts between the major demands of the Assam movement and those of the Akali morcha in the Punjab. The activists of the Akali morcha complain that parts of Punjabi-speaking territory remained in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, when the present Punjab State was carved out of post-partition Punjab, because Punjabi-speaking Hindus declared Hindi to be their mother tongue. They want these territories to be restored to the Punjab, along with the Punjabi-speaking Hindus living there, even though this will tilt the demographic balance marginally against the Sikhs and in favour of the Hindus. (Of course, the overall demographic balance in the proposed enlarged Punjab will still favour the Sikhs, especially if it includes the Ganganagar areas in Rajasthan recently colonised by the Punjabi Sikhs which are also demanded by the Akali morcha leaders).

More than enough has been said so far to make the point that the sudden challenges of 'regionalism' are no temporary ripples on the placid waters of Indian politics which will soon pass away. They are strong waves in heavy seas arising out of deep-going changes beneath the surface which have been long in the making; and are

likely to persist for a long time to come. They have almost certainly decisively reversed the trend towards political monocentrism discussed at the beginning of this article.

However interesting and meaningful (and also unexpected) in itself, the Congress(I)'s decisive victory in the Delhi metropolitan and municipal elections, which were also fought as a 'plebiscitary' election for or against political monocentrism, may turn out to be no more than one of several bright flashes in the pan of Indian politics. Nor should it complacently be assumed that the diverse 'regionalist' challenges will cancel each other out.

As noted above, many of the demands of the diverse 'regionalist' forces, especially the Assamese and Akali, are inconsistent with each other and at cross purposes, but others are not, and none of them are frivolous or trivial. It is most unlikely that they will cancel each other out.

At the same time, it is almost equally clear that the 'regionalist' forces cannot easily come to terms with each other simply by agreeing to have a loose Indian confederation with a weak centre. This is so not so much because there is still in existence an all-India political party, the Congress (I), albeit with a shrinking and truncated all-India base; nor because there are other political parties with all-India horizons. It is because, as we have seen, all the 'regionalist' challengers, without exception, not only rhetorically demand a 'strong all-India centre', but need it,—by the very logic of their version of 'regionalism' in some sense or the other.

In short, it seems we must admit that the Indian political stage is set for a protracted 'war of all against all' of which Thomas Hobbes, the founder of English political science, wrote during the English civil war or protracted revolution (1640-1689). In such times, according to Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), the founder of Italian political science, in politics we 'should not deviate from what is good, if that is possible, but... know how to do evil, if that is necessary.' Hobbes'

panacea was that the most determined must win all, to establish an omnipotent, self-perpetuating 'protectorate' or leviathan, legitimised by the consent of the common people, whose 'minds...are like clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever by Public Authority shall be imprinted in them.'

Of course, the Indian political mind is influenced sub-consciously more by Chanakya than by Hobbes or Machiavelli. It tends to go beyond Hobbes and Machiavelli to propose *active instigation* of 'all against all' both in petty intrigue and intrigue on a mass scale of massive dimensions to make the omnipotent political power prevail, as sanctioned by Chanakyan realism. The formidable Chanakya doctrines explain the political moves and counter-moves of the Congress (I), the leaders of the Assam movement or of the Akali morcha (and also, of course, the Bharatiya Janata Party), better than any other. But Chanakya himself may have learnt a thing or two from, and improved upon, the politics of Aristotle's one-time pupil, Alexander the Great, who tried to conquer India, but whose successor in India, Seleukos Nikator, was defeated by Chandragupta Maurya, whose mentor and minister was Chanakya.

So, there is no harm in looking a little beyond the ideas of Hobbes and Chanakya to Marx in this centenary year after his death. We may find some ideas in Marx and the Marxian tradition which help us to understand some of our problems a little better, and despair a little less, even if they do not supply us with instant, made-to-order solutions.

If we are to learn anything of immediate relevance to us in India from Marx and the Marxian tradition, it must refer to some unusual, and almost uniquely peculiar facets of the 'Indian condition', which has become almost as enigmatic as the 'human condition' seems to become as we approach the end of the twentieth century.

First, almost everyone speaks of India's enormous and bewildering diversities, of 'continental', or, at

least 'sub-continental' dimensions. It is time to come to grips with these deep-going, almost unique, diverse diversities in India, which cut across, vertically or diagonally, all identifiable, horizontal, class-focussed divisions of Indian society. The Tory radicals of England in the 19th century spoke rhetorically of the 'two nations' of England, the rich and poor, between whom there was hardly any communication except for purposes of economic exploitation and political and social oppression. But, in India, both the rich and the poor are splintered into a multiplicity of contending 'civil societies' each with an 'ethos', forms of consciousness, philosophy, morality, religion or neo-religion, ideology, political institutions or subcultures of its own.

Indian society is a heterogeneous collection of such inter-meshed 'civil societies', with many points of friction, from which sparks are flying all the time. Sometimes, especially when exploiters and power-seekers fan the flames to secure economic and political power for their 'own' civil societies, there is a mass conflagration, as in Assam in recent months, and as may be beginning in the Punjab.

A constant reminder that the roots of these multiple 'civil societies' go very deep is to be found in the almost unique fact that in India we have two languages and literary cultures (the Hindu/Urdu and the Punjabi) each of which is written in two different scripts. (Moreover, the existence and survival of these scripts supply off-and-on the basis for not only literary controversies, but latent or active political conflicts). Another reminder is the persistence of two civil laws, the Hindu and the Mohammedan (with an occasional demand that the Sikhs should also have their own Sikh civil law, rather than be governed under Hindu civil law).

Second, the process of modernisation of economic, social and political life in India has not made the rough edges of diverse Indian civil societies smoother. Still less has it fused them together to form a grand syncretic Indian civil society.

(on the models of what happened in England, France and North America when they were 'modernised' in earlier centuries).

Actually, in India this process of modernisation and economic development has precisely 'modernised' and given a new lease of life to some traditional civil societies (e.g., the intensely politicised Muslim civil society of the khilafat movement and later the Muslim League, or Bengali terrorism of the 1905 period which modernised the civil society of the sannyasi rebellion of the late Moghul period, as politicised by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his *Ananda Math*).

Sometimes 'modernisation' has created new civil societies (e.g., the anti-Brahmin Dravida civil society in the south, or the formidable consolidation of deeply entrenched communist civil societies, on the basis of communism as a highly politicised 'popular religion' in West Bengal and Tripura). Or it has made them bifurcate and proliferate (e.g., politicised Punjabi Sikhism bifurcating into rural Akali and urban Nirankari, or communism in West Bengal bifurcating for a while into the communist (Marxist) and the communist (Marxist-Leninist) or naxalite civil societies involved in a deadly conflict).

Modernisation and economic development has led to this persistence, promotion and proliferation of multiple civil societies in various ways. The first is that the opportunity (and necessity) for the consolidation or creation of such contending civil societies (with a love-hate relationship between them) became urgent with the introduction of the parliamentary voting system. This, almost uniquely in India, came together with the legitimisation of an 'extra-parliamentary' negative voting system through boycott of elections.

The weapon of boycott of elections in the 1920s was, for instance, used by the Gandhian Congress to mobilise both the enfranchised propertied classes and the still disenfranchised propertyless masses to win the elections in the 1930s and the 1940s.

The second is that the parallel extension of State-capitalist controls and State-capitalist enterprise, which was already pervasive during the war of 1939-45, and was extended steadily since 1956, was both an effect and a cause of the consolidation and proliferation of highly politicised civil societies in India, colliding, competing and occasionally colluding, each with the others.

The third has been the enormous increase in the circulation of printed literature, as well as of the products of audio-visual media. They have served as powerful instruments for fixing commitments to rival civil societies, through much greater spread of *political* literacy than generally expected (even if the spread of alphabetical literacy has been disappointing, due to the high proportion of drop-outs from the schools).

Third, — and this modern experience is also almost uniquely Indian — we in the Indian sub-continent have witnessed twice in one generation the hardening of divisions between these contending civil societies in search of territory of their own, leading to the birth of new nations within the boundaries of sovereign States (first of a ‘truncated’ Pakistan, and then of Bangladesh). Each of these events was the outcome of an almost unique, not easily repeatable, conjuncture in internal and international politics and economics.

But, fourth, — and this experience is perhaps still more peculiar to India — *many more* Indian civil societies, even after prolonged periods of incubation, have *not* emerged as seceding new nations which are sovereign within their internationally recognised national territories. Instead, they have hardened, but stabilised and dug themselves in as mutually exclusive civil societies within the complex, multi-structured edifice of an ‘Indian nation’ or ‘family of nationalities’ in the making.

20 They include first of all the civil society of the scheduled castes which came into existence under the leadership of Bala Saheb

Ambedkar as early as 1930 (during the British Labour Government’s communal award). Then, ten years before the Muslims under the leadership of Mohammed Iqbal and M.A. Jinnah did so, the scheduled castes staked their claim to separate electorates and existence as a separate nation within the Indian nation. But the same Ambedkar later authored the ingeniously drafted, somewhat amphibious federal/unitary-according-to-circumstances Constitution of India. They also include the civil societies represented by the Kashmir National Conference and both the offshoots of the Dravida Kazhakam movement, perhaps the movement for the emergence of a ‘Sikh nation’ as an integral part of the Indian nation, and perhaps, also, the embittered civil society represented by the contemporary, three-year-old Assam national movement (for reasons mentioned in the beginning of this article).

Finally, the Indian experience also delivers the message that it is *impossible* to deny the right to dissent in thought, word and in action, and obliterate dissent. Attempts to suppress dissent have strengthened the dissenters and, more often than not, led to the birth and consolidation of strongly entrenched civil societies mobilised for active or passive resistance. Indian political experience also warns all who would try to do so that it is *dangerous* to inflict too crushing a defeat on one’s opponents through elections or otherwise, as was done by the Congress (R) in the elections preceding the Emergency, and during the Emergency, or by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, founder of the People’s Party of Pakistan, in neighbouring Pakistan, or by the leaders of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in Sri Lanka.

If we turn to some of the less read writings of Marx and Lenin, and the rarely read writings of the Italian Marxist, Gramsci, we shall find there an awareness of the specific peculiarities of Indian politics synoptically sketched above.

We all know that for Marx the struggle between classes, to the

point of overthrow of one class by another, is at the centre of all social processes. But the class struggle is not fought in a vacuum; it is fought out in the refractory of a highly complex and many-sided social process which conditions the struggle between classes, as we all know.

This is exactly what Marx himself said in *The German Ideology* (1845-47). He said there that social processes are best understood as the reciprocal inter-action of elements of the civil society, i.e., forms of ideology, religion, morality, politics etc., on one side and the elements of the economic basis on the other, acting through the State apparatus. Gramsci stressed that in this interaction, the elements and institutions or molecules of the civil ‘society’ may sometimes matter more than institutions and instruments of the State apparatus. Marx himself made the same point forcefully when he reminded us, in a comment on Martin Luther’s role in the German Reformation, that ‘theory becomes a material force once it has gripped the masses’ and clashes with the material force represented by established ideas and institutions.

To be sure, Marx and Gramsci developed their concept of ‘civil society’ in relation to West European civil societies where the ‘civil society’ emerging in modern times became more and more homogeneous, rather than the multiplicity of civil societies persisting along with modernisation as in India. But, in his accounts of the First War of Independence in India (1857) and its aftermath, Marx showed an early awareness of the bifurcation of civil society in India between the ‘mutually exclusive’ civil societies of the Hindus and the Muslims.

In any case, along with these insights, the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the nature and functions of State capitalism (sometimes masquerading as State socialism), give us almost everything that is needed to understand the multiplicity of contending civil societies in modern India, not as an unnatural phenomenon, but as a natural, though almost unique phenomenon.

Most of us know also that Marxian theory, a theory of modern 'internationalism' par excellence, paid close attention to the processes, which are at least as complex as biochemical processes, by which nations and nationalities have been emerging in modern history. But what often passes unnoticed is Marx's great stress on the role of the 'religious factor', viz., of Lutheran protestantism, English protestantism, and Irish and Polish catholicism, in the birth of the German, English, Irish and Polish nations. Marx was aware, as our living experience in the Indian sub-continent has made us painfully aware, that in the ferment that leads to the birth of nations and nationalities, religion as 'the general theory of the world, ... a compendium of universal knowledge, logic in popular form' has sometimes served as the 'sigh of the oppressed ... the heart of the heartless world, ... the opium of the people', but has also, sometimes, become a formidable 'material force' once it has 'gripped the masses', by 'correctly posing social problems, even if it cannot supply the solution'. Indeed, Gramsci, writing nearly a century after Marx wrote this on the role of religion, was candid enough to declare that communism itself, after the Bolshevik revolution was more of a 'popular religion' than what the Russian nineteenth century social philosopher, Herzen, (with Lenin's approval) wanted it to be—the 'algebra of revolution', or a popular science of politics, which is what Gramsci too hoped it would one day become.

But, in any case, Marxian internationalism is based on the fundamental idea that when an aroused civil society is ready to emerge as a nation with its sovereign territory, nothing can or should be done to stop its onward march. The issue can only be resolved by partition or secession, the 'self-determination' cannot and should not be denied, as we too have discovered twice in the Indian sub-continent. Marx upheld every nation's right to partition or secession, hoping that with 'national peace', the forces of social progress would advance everywhere, but *without* illusions that they necessarily would.

However, as noted more than once in this article, the main issue facing us in India now is the hardening of mutually exclusive civil societies within the Indian nation or a family of Indian nationalities in the making. Very few of these civil societies can, or want to, achieve their aims by getting out of India through secession or a new partition. The only clue to a Marxian understanding of what should be done in such unusual circumstances is to be found in Marx's (and Lenin's) basic commitment to political democracy, understood to mean freedom to think, voice or act in dissent, against the powers that be.

Hardly any attention *at all* is paid to this basic Marxian commitment. Indeed, it can almost be said that both those who swear by Marx, as well as those who criticise or curse him, seem to have a vested interest in denying this Marxian commitment for a variety of reasons which cannot be discussed here. But the evidence that there *was* such a commitment by the 'young' Marx which the 'mature' Marx never repudiated, and which Lenin renewed and never repudiated, though he qualified it after the Bolshevik seizure of power, is unambiguous, and cannot be ignored. Marx did say, without any qualification whatsoever, that 'the mortal danger for every being lies in losing itself' and hence 'lack of freedom is the real mortal danger for mankind.'

He also wrote that 'democracy is the essence...the reference point (or 'truth') of all State constitutions', and that it is only in a democracy that 'man does not exist for the law, but the law for man', contrasting democracy to the 'despotic State' where the 'political State is nothing but the caprice of a single individual'. To ensure dissent, he insisted on 'the free press' as the 'spiritual mirror in which a people can see itself' whose 'advantages' cannot be enjoyed 'without putting up with its inconveniences' since 'you cannot pluck a rose without its thorns'. He expressed total opposition to suppression of dissenting opinion, for example by press censorship, by arguing that 'every mystery has its attractions...where public opinion is a mystery to it-

self, it is won over from the outset by every forbidden work' which loses its attraction if freedom of opinion deprives it of its 'externally imposing effect'.

Renewing and generalising this commitment, Lenin wrote seventy years later, in 1912, that 'the greater the degree of political liberty in a country...the easier it is for the mass of the people to find its bearings in the fight between the parties and to learn politics...and find out the truth'. He declared that 'in practice all measures debarring a particular group or section of the population from politics...are absolutely impossible and unrealisable,' adding that there should be 'complete freedom for any class or social estate...to take part in politics' and that this freedom should be extended to the clergy, including the Jesuits, so that a clash of ideas and opinions can lead to a 'clarification' of social issues.

This basic commitment to freedom of opinion was never repudiated by Lenin in the remaining twelve years of his life, perhaps because it is based on arguments which are irrefutable. It is an implication of these arguments that India's myriad contending civil societies simply *cannot* suppress or eradicate each other. Nor should they try to do so, but continually renew the terms on which they co-exist within Indian society if they are to achieve their aims partly, if not wholly.

If we take seriously the less known Marxian ideas about civil societies and nations and nationalities, and the least known Marxian ideas about democracy based on recognition of dissent, we can make a fresh start in finding a way out of the political war of attrition in Assam on the basis of the following terms.

1. Present-day Assam without Cachar should be recognised as historic Assamese territory within India, where the regional levers of State power are in the hands of the Assamese, regardless of the demographic and political complexion of the electorate. This is to be ensured by reserving a majority of seats in the Legislative assembly of Assam for the Assamese to be contested by

Assamese belonging to different political parties. The Assamese will be defined as all who declare their mother tongue to be Assamese, or who have adopted the Assamese language, and were born in Assam, and are residents of Assam.

2. Assam is to be the official State language, and the Assamese language, literature and culture is to receive continuous protection by whatever measures are recommended by a panel of writers in Assamese belonging to all shades of Assamese cultural trends and political opinion.

3. Sales of agricultural land by Assamese to non-Assamese citizens are to be prohibited. Recovery, if desired, by Assamese of land sold by them to non-Assamese, should be facilitated by special measures officially adopted, by payment of compensation at rates prescribed under laws on ceilings of agricultural landholdings, and in conformity with such laws in all other respects, cultivating or occupancy rights of share-croppers and tenants should be protected. Re-distribution of land owned by Assamese to cultivators under land reforms and land ceiling laws should be made on condition that the beneficiaries, Assamese and non-Assamese, will form agricultural co-operatives, joined by land-owners retaining land within the prescribed ceiling, for management of agricultural operations.

4. The terms on which Assamese natural wealth, especially its petroleum and potential coal reserves and plantation products are to be traded with the rest of India should be fixed on the basis of continuous consultations between the central government, the Assam government, and all others concerned.

5. There should be no disenfranchisement of residents as voters, except for immigrants who cannot establish their residence in Assam before 1971, and the latter have to be regarded as stateless persons without voting rights but with their right to live and work protected, until their future is settled jointly by the governments of Assam, India, Bangladesh and international agencies on consideration of human

justice. There should be no deportation to Bangladesh, or dispersal to other Indian States either of post-1971 illegal immigrants, or post-1961 entrants from other Indian States, except of those who are willing to move out on the basis of refugee rehabilitation schemes drawn up by the central government and parliament, in consultation with the government of Bangladesh, and governments of Indian States which are willing to join the scheme.

6. An interim council with plenipotentiary powers to give concrete shape to proposals 1-5 above should be formed, which includes one nominee each of the political parties represented in the present and preceding legislative assembly of Assam from all constituencies except constituencies in Cachar, and the nominees of all other public organisations involved for and against the movement for the boycott of the recent elections. The present ministry, formed after the 1983 elections, may continue as a caretaker ministry in charge of routine administration until agreement is reached on points 1-5 and fresh elections are held, or for six months, whichever is earlier.

7. The choice of constituencies to be demarcated as the reserve seats for the Assamese, including the principles on which the choice is to be made, are to be decided by the proposed interim council. The interim council will also have to work out safeguards for the non-Assamese who will remain a permanent minority in the legislature as regards their representation in Assam government service, their right to receive education through the medium of non-Assamese languages, their right to live and work in Assam, their right to vote as well as the right of the constituencies represented by the minority of non-Assamese legislators to receive a fair share of development expenditure by the Assam government, etc.

A fresh start along these lines in Assam may also help to find *different*, but more than temporary, cosmetic or patch-work solutions for the other political war of attrition which has been going on in the Punjab, and is fast reaching a climax.

A question of survival

ASHOK MITRA

THE wrongest possible way of attempting to administer a continent is to adhere to the doctrine of winner-takes-all. The latest and the most famous winner, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, came to her triumph in the Lok Sabha polls in 1980 with a bare 42 per cent of the total votes cast in her favour. The subsequent elections for the State Assemblies and by-elections for the Lok Sabha have their own message to convey. It would not be an unfair assumption that she and her party now command the allegiance of not more than one-third of the electorate, which is too thin a base on which to build imperial pretensions. Even were it otherwise, even were she, at any point of time, sustained by the support and loyalty of, let us say, more than one half of the nation's citizens, it would still be dangerous folly to ride roughshod over the sentiments and aspirations of the residual sections of the population. For, these sections may still represent a mass of population exceeding that of easily a hundred member countries of the United Nations. The moment we define India as a continent, we come to take cognisance of certain specific realities. A continent encompasses a diversity of languages and ethnic groups, an array of cultural divides, a non-homogeneity in social and

economic circumstances and, as a cumulative consequence, wide-ranging disparity in beliefs and ideologies propounded by the constituents of the nation.

Awareness of such hard, cold facts of life has been revealed to the decision-makers in New Delhi following the trauma of Assam and Punjab and, at a different level, of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. But—and this is another facet of reality—there is still but little appreciation of how things would have been much, much worse in case the integrating influence of the communist movement was not felt in such strategic States as Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura. Just try to imagine the situation likely to obtain if Shrimati Gandhi, precisely because she is Shrimati Gandhi, goes against her better judgment and summarily removes the Communist Party of India (Marxist) from the administration of West Bengal.

Ethnic, linguistic, social and economic entities in different parts of the country are fast reaching the end of their tether. They are, all the while, sending signals to New Delhi that the supplantation of the feudal model, which was the objective of the nation's battle for independence, by

an increasingly centralised, increasingly authoritarian one will not pass, those in control at the centre must mend themselves, or else disintegration will be the rule. The non-parallel cases of Assam and Punjab clinch a further point. Neither economic advancement, nor the absence of it, while an important element in the conglomeration of things, can by itself quite explain the totality of the developing chasm; Punjab's burgeoning economic fortunes have not at all helped to compensate for the wounded ego of the Sikh community.

It is all too easy to continue on the road to disaster. If at the back of the mind of Indira Gandhi and the ones close to her, the attraction for the imperial model does not lose its lustre, as a nation we are then in deep trouble. The imperial model is not an integrated indigenous model. The Mughals had tried it out in the Indian continent for the first time in history. Even in the course of the one hundred and odd years of their tenure, the experiment could never quite proceed beyond its very loose federal arrangements. The moment Aurangzeb began to push hard to transform it into a centralised conformity, things fell apart, and the humpty-dumpty of the empire could not be put together again.

After a gap of more than a century, the British, almost absentmindedly, tried to revive the experiment. They had an advantage which an external conqueror comes to have: as imperial masters, they could be — or at least pretend to be — subjectively as much as objectively, equidistant from the different nationalities constituting the Indian nation. Even had the Second World War not intervened and India's struggle for national independence not intensified, perhaps in any event the British would have been persuaded to discard the imperial model: the administrative detachment of Ceylon and, subsequently, of Burma, was an early enough recognition of the inherent diseconomies in scale. One, even though somewhat charitable, interpretation of their forcing the partition of the country in 1947 could be their honest belief that the Indian empire, as it then was, was unworkable as an operational entity.

Both the imperial experiments, it could still be argued, somehow sustained themselves for beyond a century, so why could not the Nehru-Gandhis? For one thing, Indira Gandhi and her party do not have the advantages which the Mughals or the British had. In a medieval setting, the Mughals could get away by murdering nationalities wholesale; as an alien imperial power, the British could force many unsavoury things down the throat which it would be impossible to repeat in today's milieu.

The other argument, that, since during the first thirty years following independence, the different national groups in India did not make so much as a squeak, why should they commence to do so now; and perhaps one or two stiff doses of disciplining would cure the malady; is also shot with holes. A feudal people, smothered for centuries, take a while to bestir themselves; but, once they have proceeded along the learning curve, the deployment of medieval weaponry against them will be an invitation to disaster. One does not have to travel far for evidence in support of this assertion: all one has to do is to remember what happened to Pakistan the moment the Bengalis were sought to be pushed around.

What, then, is the way out? India is not *sui generis*, nor is the genre of problems the continental dimension of India presents altogether foreign in history. The structural dissimilarities notwithstanding, the other continental countries, such as the United States, Canada, Brazil, the Soviet Union and China, must have waded through a course of experience from which it should be possible for us to draw some worthwhile conclusions for ourselves. The immensely favourable land-man ratio, and the absence of any acute linguistic heterogeneity, reduce the national question to manageable proportions in both Brazil and the United States: even so, the significance of the wide latitude provided in both countries to the federating entities can hardly be missed. Canada has a vast expanse of resources and very few people; so what, keeping Quebec in good humour continues to be the major

national challenge, and one cannot quite be certain that the nation will succeed in maintaining its present integrity despite the spate of concessions accorded to the French-speaking minority.

It is in this context that the giant strides the socialist countries have made to resolve the national question command extra attention. In some circles it is no longer *infra dig* to mention Joseph Stalin, but one can do worse than take a look at the following, most perceptive, comments by him, while replying to the discussions on the draft-constitution at the Twelfth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in April, 1923:

If within the Central Executive Committee of the Union we could create two chambers having equal powers, one of which would be elected at the Union Congress of Soviets, irrespective of nationality, and the other by the republics and national regions (the republics being equally represented, and the national regions also being equally represented) and endorsed by the same Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics, I think that then our supreme institutions would express not only the class interests of all the working people without exception, but also purely national needs. We would have an organ which would express the special interests of the nationalities, peoples and races inhabiting the Union of Republics. Under the conditions prevailing in our Union, which as a whole unites not less than 140,000,000 people, of whom about 65,000,000 are non-Russians, in such a country it is impossible to govern unless we have with us, here in Moscow, in the supreme organ, emissaries of these nationalities, to express not only the interests common to the proletariat as a whole, but also special, specific, national interests. Without this it will be impossible to govern, comrades. Unless we have this barometer, and people capable of formulating these special needs of the individual nationalities, it will be impossible to govern. (J.V. Stalin,

Works, Volume 5, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, pp. 263 — 4.)

Stalin could have been addressing himself to some of our specific problems circa the 1980s — problems which any nation of continental dimensions must resolve if it is to survive. The discussions at the Twelfth Party Congress culminated in the Constitution of the USSR. The All-Union Central Executive Committee, the highest decision-making body of the Union, was made to comprise of two chambers: the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities. The former consisted of representatives of the constituent republics elected in proportion to population; the latter, on the other hand, consisted of *equal representation* for each union republic or autonomous republic.

The Council of Nationalities thus embodied a formal recognition of the principle of equality among the different nationalities constituting the union, irrespective of their population size. The two chambers were enjoined to share, on a completely equal footing, the rights and functions of the All-Union Central Executive Committee. Each single act or decision of the Committee was contingent upon the concurrence of both of the chambers voting separately. Were differences of opinion to arise between them which were not amenable to be resolved in a joint session, the matter had to be referred to the All-Union Congress of Soviets.

References are often made to the enshrinement in the Soviet Constitution of the right of individual nationalities to secede from the Union. True, the formal existence of such a provision quietened many of the doubts and questions of the federating republics, specially the linguistically non-Russian ones, in the twenties and the thirties. But the right to secede was at best a fall-back of the last resort: the cementing of the Soviet Union was helped the most by the presence of the second chamber where all nationalities had equal representation, and which had an equal right to be heard along with the other chamber elected on the basis of popu-

lation. The fact that no major or, for that matter, even minor, decision of the Central Executive Committee could be made operational without the concurrence of the Chamber of Nationalities was perhaps the most important factor in the crucial period between the middle 1920s to the middle 1930s which enabled the Soviet Union evolve in the manner it did, allowing it gradually to attain a granite unity which could withstand the strains and stresses of the successive economic and political upheavals of the decade.

India is no socialist republic. The homogeneity of class interests which facilitated the coming together of the different nationalities in the wave of the specific provision in the Soviet Constitution, equating the prerogatives of the federating units with those of the Union itself, will remain an alien concept here till as long as the process of social transformation is not completed. But, if the polity is to survive, what better way out can there be for the Indian people than what is suggested in the original Soviet Constitution? The solution to the national question proposed by Stalin, and incorporated in the Soviet Constitution enacted in 1923, is not altogether dissimilar from the safeguards the American Constitution offers to the federating States, even to those that are sparsely populated. The American President is a bit of a *sui generis* in constitutional jurisprudence. Even so, he is forced to share his prerogatives with the Congress, which is much more than a mere legislative body; and in the Congress, the House of Representatives, elected on the basis of population, is far outstripped, in the matter of power and influence-peddling, by the Senate, in which all the States, from New York to Hawaii, have equal representation.

In the light of what has been happening all over the country in recent months, should not one take another look at our Constitution not merely to ensure that the centre is made to shed many of its functions, powers and obligations to the States, but also to re-orient the concept of the centre itself? And should not we remind ourselves that the formal

scription of the federal entity in the Indian Constitution is 'the Union', not 'the Centre'. Were the Union to reflect the true attributes of a union of nationalities, much of the suspicion about New Delhi's motives and intentions could yet begin to melt away. Why cannot, for example, the Rajya Sabha be altogether re-structured and converted into a chamber where all States, from Uttar Pradesh to Nagaland, have equal representation? Why cannot such a re-structured Rajya Sabha be permitted to have prerogatives identical with those of the Lok Sabha, including on matters concerning finance? What is it, apart from the bind of neo-colonialism, which insists that the Rajya Sabha has to be the exact replica of the British House of Lords, a toothless wonder given to vacuous talk?

Do not the roots of much of the growing alienation lie in the conviction, fairly widespread, that the Union Government is by and large devoid of any proper concern for the problems at the grassroots in the States? Were the States allowed, through equal representation in the Rajya Sabha and through an equalisation of the powers and function of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, a major say in central decision-making, there could be a perceptible abatement of this feeling of being the outcast. The Rajya Sabha, after all, continues to be described as the Council of States. At the moment there is little of counselling the States are empowered to do through this body. A change here, which could herald a qualitative transformation in the entire climate, holds out perhaps the only prospect of saving this continental land of ours from a whirlwind descent to chaos.

To be persuaded to agree to such a change will call for a major non-ego trip for those currently clinging to total power in New Delhi. It will also imply a formal recognition of the reality that the States represent more or less distinct national entities which together constitute the great Indian nation. The mess the nation is likely to be drawn into, in case there is a refusal to accept the facts as they are, is mind-boggling in dimension.

The congress culture

I. K. GUJRAL

HAS the 'Congress culture' lost its momentum and capacity for renewal? Is it covering its last paces on the crutch of power alone, or can its pristine fervour be restored by regroupings of its erstwhile votaries?

But, first of all, what is this Congress culture? Like the proverbial description of an elephant by a group of the blind, it has come to mean different things to different people. Any worthwhile attempt to understand its contemporary fate must begin with reference to Gandhiji — its fountainhead.

While perceiving a brand new strategy to fight the might of imperial power, Gandhiji had fully comprehended the ethos of his people — social, cultural, economic and religious. His concept of *satyagrah* was indeed a comprehensive culture —

a total way of life. The initiated underwent a sea change in their traditional beliefs regarding the caste system, communal affiliations, status of women, rural industry, the stigma attached to jail going and so on. The more deeply involved missionary order even vowed to remain celibate and renounce the worldly.

On a mass scale, the Gandhian miracle transformed the psyche of a whole people — even the non-participants were affected. Overnight the nation learnt that non-violence was a weapon of the determined and the courageous.

Erroneously, we sometimes view Gandhiji's role only in terms of gaining independence. His most important contribution was what he did for the Indian character and capacities. His leadership, regardless

of its objective consequences, subjectively repaired the nation's wounded self-esteem and restored its faith in itself. He recruited a new brand of leaders from different sections of society and thus gave a new coherence to our national life.

He effectively moulded some elements of our tradition to perform modern functions. While Indians were familiar with the concepts of *satyagrah* and *ahimsa*, only he could reincarnate them into powerful weapons to serve the needs of a socio-political battle.

Although there was a high component of traditionality in his philosophy, he did not permit this to lead him into any obscurantist frame. On the contrary, he was the most successful moderniser of our times. His ideology was built on intimate relationship between national identity, self-esteem and indigenous cultural traditions. This induced a new outlook based on the close link between courage and integrity.

For himself, Gandhiji wished to be judged simultaneously as a private and public person. To a very large extent his effectiveness is attributable to his personal virtue. Yet, he did not attempt to build a dogma or sponsor a codified religion. When he sponsored movements to fight social stagnation and age old degeneration, he was introducing a culture which could raise an entire people to a new experience of self-realisation.

Such a comprehensive movement implied action in various spheres requiring a variety of cadres who could give undivided attention to their chosen areas of pursuit. Only during the heat of the battle were they permitted to inter-mix roles. Whilst Harijan welfare and khadi work attracted full-time workers imbued with missionary zeal, the middle class professionals and intelligentsia participated at times of battle. In the interregnum they pursued their normal vocations, though giving some of their time to the Congress organisation.

— Whatever initial scepticism there might have been was swept aside by

increasing numbers who responded to his vision. The intelligentsia emerging from the medical, legal and academic professions soon found themselves in the leading ranks of a mighty national upsurge. This leadership role transformed their own personalities, saturating them with this new culture.

Although Congressmen and women of that era were devotedly working in spheres of their choice, the Gandhian philosophy provided a common denominator between them and the 'constructive workers', who were deeply involved in rejuvenation programmes aimed at re-kindling self-esteem in the peasantry, the harijans and the landless poor. In the face of firm opposition from the Imperial State, Gandhiji was able to undertake massive programmes of rural reconstruction, eradication of untouchability, social reform, public sanitation, prohibition and so on.

Such an upsurge could not be perceived in terms of a narrow party structure. The Congress emerged as a vast platform that had the capacity to contain all shades of socio-political opinion. As this surge moved towards the delta of its political accomplishment, it got split into distinct streams — each powerful yet having varied velocity and coloration.

Entry in the legislatures had bred illusions of power. The debates and rhetoric there were a satisfying and elevating experience to some. Others were convinced that it was a mirage which would dilute the vigour of struggle. Gandhiji did not permit any slowing down. He allowed the limited use of the legislatures to supplement the dynamism of the movement and as an exercise to demolish the false facades of the colonial rulers. All the same, a void between the legal luminaries and the homespun constructive workers was becoming discernible.

As the Raj came nearer to its end, new visions of authority and rulership were beginning to be seen. The gulf between the inhabitants of Wardha ashram and the prospective tenants of the ministerial residences was widening. Overnight, they

began to talk in different dialects. Once the political objective had been accomplished, the rift was complete. 'Congress culture' had the glitter of office and perquisites and power while the 'Gandhian culture' retained its traditional commitment to fundamentals of constructive work aimed at in-depth social transformation.

When Nehru on that fateful day was reminding us of our 'tryst', the Mahatma was walking on the dirt roads of Noakhali healing the wounds of communal frenzy. In a way, the two symbolised a parting of the ways. Both wanted to attend to the tasks of our new-found independence in different fashion. With Gandhiji's martyrdom the ashramites were lost in the middle of the road. Gradually, over the years, the once dynamic vision turned into a ritualistic cult.

Nehru and his leading colleagues were committed patriots and men of outstanding merit. Their foremost concern had to be the consolidation of the new State. Constructing institutions and evolving new policies was a large task indeed. With his sense of history and scientific outlook, Nehru had perceived India as a modern industrialised society that could banish its age old poverty and backwardness with the help of science and technology. He believed that only a socialist pattern could stabilise Indian society. Such an equilibrium had to be politically rooted in a pluralistic, liberal and federal frame.

But, vast ranks of the old and new Congressmen were now exposed to temptations of power and office. Competition and rivalry divided them in factions and groups. Business lobbies became active in pursuance of personal ambition and economic interests. Yet, the edifice did not crack because at all levels the senior leaders maintained a sense of mission and Gandhian dignity.

Closer links between the *Bhoodan* movement and the State machinery perhaps could have provided an effective programme for rural reconstruction and the ushering in of egalitarian relationships. In the pro-

cess it would have sustained a committed cadre at grass roots level. But the centralised bureaucracy and power-conscious rulers did not have the time or patience to pursue the laborious tasks of social change. The Congress-culture wallas now looked at Wardhaite as distant poor cousins who were occupied with outmoded fads. The habit of wearing khadi continued but it had come to arouse a different feeling in the minds of the people.

The Nehruvian era had identified the objectives of the new State and enshrined them in the constitution. In this the citizen of free India stood supreme. He had given an enlightened, democratic, egalitarian constitution unto himself. Meaningfully pursued, this policy frame could lead India to its destiny with dignity. Nehru bequeathed a well structured State that had identified its social priorities. The planning process had been set in motion. Resources management was based on an egalitarian philosophy. The foreign policy frame had been tested. With these well-balanced four estates, it was smooth and easy periodically to test the legitimacy of governments through the ballot box.

In the process he had induced a fresh phase in the Congress culture which would commit itself to the fundamentals of an egalitarian, democratic and federal polity. But weaknesses emanated from new centres of power within the party. Many a veteran of yester-year had died or opted out. The politics of the freedom struggle were set aside for the time being. Many of the new entrants into political life were lured by temptations of power and money that sucked them into a duality of values. On the whole, though, the Congress culture still symbolised the urge to consolidate a secular, socialist, democratic society, which was still believed to be the main vehicle for transporting a traditional society into the contemporary era.

Nehru's own input in transforming post-Independence India was significant and historic. But, as a party, the Congress was weakening in its resolve to lead a revolution of social change, even as it continued

to wear the old mask and mouth the familiar slogans. A major structural change in organisation might have revived its old fervour. As it was, there were now two rival centres of power — the Prime Minister and the President of the Party. While Nehru, with his charismatic leadership was able to reduce the status of the Congress President, in the States the rivalry kept growing. This helped in the building of a 'Boss-oriented' set-up.

The power base of the 'Bosses' was never solid. Their dubious fund-raising methods and alliances with local domineering elements gradually isolated the organisation from any aspirations of the poor. In coalition with big money, they sensed the large opportunity that was coming their way on the eve of Nehru's death. The 'Syndicate' now had power to take over the country and appoint the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers to rule on its behalf.

This was indeed a major watershed in the Congress culture. A totally new pattern of Tammany Hall style leadership took over the Party and the country. From now onwards the Congressman had to be a camp follower of the Bosses who had divided the country amongst themselves into personal fiefs. The days of ideals and ideology seemed very remote.

Shastri's tenure was too brief. His personal dignity and integrity impressed everyone but he was unable to influence any change in the Congress and its new way of life. The 'Syndicate of Bosses' got one more chance after his death. By now they had fully consolidated their strangle-hold on the organisation and had forged alliances with different power factors. The rich peasantry and industrial bourgeoisie were on their side. So, the Congress culture wallas now did not have the time nor the need to work for any social change programme, particularly if it hurt the interests of their powerful allies.

While the Bosses thought they had decisive power in electing the new Prime Minister, their smugness took the masses for granted. The 67

poll — the first without Nehru — therefore, shook the very foundations of their approach. The electorate rejected them, one by one, as also their main aides. But this did not release the Party from their clutches. Happenings after 1967 are a long tale of conflict between them and the new forces brought in by Mrs. Gandhi. For a while it seemed that the Nehruvian era with its commitment to the 'Left of Centre' could be rebuilt.

But the euphoria, after the defeat of the 'Bosses', was short-lived. Though the masses responded, the Congress organisation could not recover its original cultural elan. The rot had completely eaten up the roots. While it was possible to create occasional flashes in the pan, the new power factors lacked the capacity to rejuvenate the dying culture. It was far easier for them to battle on their familiar bureaucratic ground. They had a feeling that a highly centralised power structure with a single point authority could serve the purpose better.

It would be futile to examine the intentions and subjective beliefs of those who had initiated this 'flash-in-the-pan revolution.' Its architects should have known that ideologies and plans of action need both commitment and vision which goes beyond the exigencies of a given moment. Since the new model was highly personalised it had the impact of a coup. The Centre of this new power pattern was based on a coalition between a section of leftist intellectuals and power conscious bureaucrats who restructured the instruments of governance to create a pinnacle of authority. Their well intentioned leftist tactic lacked the capacity to build a party which could act as a catalyst for social change at grass root levels. Without that fundamental change, they were easily replaced by 'influence-pedlars' who soon occupied the vantage points in the monolith, who relied on populist slogans and, on the side, built their personal fortunes.

This resulted in cut-throat competition. Series of speedy 'palace coups' were replacing one set of 'advisers' with another. The ever-shrinking political elite ruthlessly

played its disastrous game. The role of the Congressmen, inside the legislatures and outside, was now intensely competitive — how to secure the right side of the new power brokers. The era of mass contact and sensitivity to the problems of the people had come to a close. Revolutionary commitment had vanished earlier, humane compassion ended now.

The Emergency was, thus, a logical though shattering experience for the party. The Congress culture now bade farewell to liberal and democratic values. Rulership became an end unto itself. All institutional frameworks, by which Congressmen had sworn all these years, were removed or modified beyond recognition. The inheritors of the Congress culture had lost all the courage which Gandhiji had bequeathed them. They submitted in silence.

It is a tribute to Gandhiji that all that he had done to change the psyche of his people was not passed on to Congressmen alone. He had left his legacy for the entire nation. And this heritage fully asserted itself in 1977 to flush out the pseudo Congress-culture wallas, lock, stock and barrel.

The inherent weaknesses of those who followed were many. Though they began their era by going to Gandhiji's *samadhi*, they did not understand the message of his revolution. Some of them professed linkages with Gandhian tradition but lacked the capacity to translate his socio-economic model into State policy. The Socialists and the Nehruvians amongst them were loud in rhetoric but weak in policy. Collectively, they presented a sight of negative confusion.

The post-1980 Congress — now rechristened as Congress (I) — is a different species altogether. The name has obvious advantages but this latest version of the party is, to say the least, a totally new product. Despite loud articulations and professions, it is clear that the Gandhian and the Nehruvian ideology, ideals, models for social transformation have yielded ground to the expediencies of power. In this phase, alliances are openly made

with entrenched elites who persist in their reckless game of economic and social polarisation, pushing the majority of our people to positions of despair.

In its present phase, the Congress culture votaries are desperately dependent on 'pro and anti' waves and their role has shifted from nation building to regime building. At this stage — which is obviously the last — it is unable to stand up to face even the challenges of 'instant leaders' who have constructed their images via cinematography.

As the crisis deepens, one hears some desperate cries for the 'revival of Congress culture'. These 'heros' of yester-year forget that old doctrines and old horses are only superficially reliable. The advocates of 'renewed unity' lack the capacity to understand the compulsions of the contemporary situation. They seem to feel that this revivalism may provide a short-cut to power. They are not so much grieved by the 'death of the culture' as that of their own personal fate, even though, at different stages, some have themselves been its grave-diggers.

While groping around in the dark, another set, primarily as a tribute to their own past, rhetorically favours the 'radicalisation of politics'. This may attract limited attention but does not get much mileage since it is unable to identify the malady which has enveloped national life. Its votaries do not clarify whether such a programme aims at spelling out a new ethos or it is merely a battle to occupy the palace under a more attractive colour.

When the Congress culture is perhaps breathing its last, let us recall that its contribution to the consolidation of the State has been remarkable. It initiated the movement of a feudal society into the earlier phases of an industrial one. Also, it has built a scientific, sophisticated and multi-dimensional elite that is conscious of its historical role. And, most important, it has constructed a national ethos that is conscious of its history and is concerned about

the future. Its contribution, in both phases — pre and after freedom — has indeed been considerable.

We have now finally reached a stage when the party and the culture have parted ways. But the impact of such a culture can never vanish or die intestate; it has affected the basis of our national life and is a value referent for our public ethic. Indian politics and public ethics cannot be segregated for long, nor can we ignore the Gandhian insistence on the high quality of means to achieve desirable objectives.

The evolution of a new socio-political culture has to be based on credible economic planning that must shift its emphasis from capital to man — the unlimited resource that India possesses. The Gandhian model was not, after all, as obscurantist as it has been made to appear. Gandhi realised that any economic model built on financial capital as the main lever, would inevitably lead to a divided society with the elite cornering all the gains and patronising the politics of money and personal profit. A credible agenda must also look at the serious distortions induced by over-centralisation. Reversal of this process will face formidable opposition from entrenched interests and a powerful media.

In a way, Chandra Shekhar's effort to reach out to rural and slum India may be the symbolic beginning of a break-away from the prevailing cynicism. His extended *padayatra* has certainly highlighted the helplessness of the deprived sections of our society. While final judgement must wait, this may be the beginning of another era. As he himself says, he is no Gandhi or JP, but his effort may perhaps generate a broad based movement which might articulate the frustrations and aspirations of the people and in the process work out a coherent, political-cum-ethical model. Such a model, obviously, cannot be copied from any known indigenous or foreign frame. All the same, one can speculate that any credible socio-political-economic culture will have to draw heavily on all that Gandhi stood for.

A new nationalist culture

JASWANT SINGH

AT the centre of any living political organisation must be the kernel of an idea. This seed must be nurtured constantly, enabled to grow, to mature, to reproduce and finally to perish to be replaced by the new. Whilst retaining essential anchorage in this cyclical continuity, the idea itself must continue to evolve. For it to stand still is to atrophy. When that happens, political organisations structured around it inevitably also wither. In the sub-continental politics of India, we currently witness four major themes.

The primary is a desire for change. People are sickened of the existing order, they are tired of what goes by the name of 'politics', politicians and their antics. All this charade fulfils neither their aspirations nor does it meet their demands. They want to change it. The direction, dimensions, indeed, the various ramifications or instruments with which this change is to be brought about are not yet clear. Even though we may not be able intelligibly to articulate this desire for change, leave alone give it form and direction, we do grasp at even

an illusion of hope the moment it presents itself.

The Janata victory of 1977 was precisely such an articulation. The more recent electoral defeats of the ruling party in Andhra and Karnataka are also part of the same manifestations. Where the decision is not clear-cut, it is only because the electorate is unable to determine whether the alternative is worthy of its confidence. In such circumstances, we witness a Haryana situation. In others the electorate, timorous of its own boldness, stops just short of rejecting the existing and investing in its yearnings for a change.

The electorate gives a warning of its disaffection, yet, with subtle selfishness, opts to continue with the existing, as say in Himachal or in Delhi. It stops short because, perhaps, it is fearful of causing a social upheaval. By and large, societies when given the choice between order and disorder, will choose the former. This is almost an atavistic reaction for, in the minds of all of us Indians, political uncertainty is synonymous

with social disorder. Unless, therefore, the new has sufficient credibility, the old, however discredited and unacceptable, continues only because of the reassurance of the familiar. This dilemma is the ruling party's only remaining strength. It is the opposition's greatest challenge.

Yet another theme is what can be referred to as the cyclical, swing-door theory. Since 1967, we observe that at about the midway point of any elected government's tenure in office, be it at the centre or in the States, (unless there is no political movement at all), there comes a point of crisis. The demands and aspirations of the people are such and the clogging of the governmental plumbing, miscalled machinery, by now so total, that grievance redressal systems are just not able to cope. Though the normal tenure in our constitutional dispensation is five years, at about this mid-point, failure on the essential grievances and basic wants front, makes the electorate impatient. For the first two years or so an elected government is carried forward on the sheer momentum of its victory. Thereafter comes the crunch.

When that happens, one of two possibilities normally assert themselves. Either this disaffection results in the elected government floundering and collapsing. (Witness the fates of the various SVD governments that came up after the '67 election. By about mid '69 almost all of them were gone.) Or if, however, they do not do so, it is only because of the dishonest beguilement of the ad-hoc.

The art of the ad-hoc, pretending to be a kind of a radical panacea, was in the beginning exercised with finesse and with some temporary effectiveness by the present Prime Minister. The '69 split of the Congress Party, the abolition of privy purses, nationalisation of banks, by themselves no more than cosmetic ad-hocism, appeared to give the impression of major radical movements towards change. It was this pretence of the rejection of the old and the implicit promise of something different and new, (along of

course, with other factors, largely the Bangladesh war, etc.), that resulted in the great electoral sweeps at the beginning of the 70s. Yet even here, by about 73-74, the Gujarat Nav Nirman movement and JP in Bihar had already placed huge interrogation marks. It was becoming exceedingly difficult to rely only on the ever diminishing returns of the ad-hoc.

The victory of the Janata Party in 1977, though few saw it coming, was an equally inevitable swing of the door. That victory was, in a very fundamental sense, the articulation by the Indian people of a desire for radical change. Power came to the Janata Party but it failed to comprehend the essential idea behind its victory. It failed, in a very real sense, to become the aspired-for instrument of change. To the people, to their immense disillusionment, it represented no more than yet another agent of the status quo. When, therefore, the underpinning of the strength of an idea was knocked out, internal squabbles within a hurriedly put together political organism, were inevitable. The Janata Party tottered and fell under the weight of its own inner contradictions. Its defeat at the polls that followed was by then a predictable certainty. This party was rejected by the Indian people, who re-elected the Congress in 1980 only because, as they then said to themselves, better a known devil of the status quo than an unknown one.

The present government's victory in 1980 has been followed by the near losses in mid '82 in Kerala, Haryana and Himachal; followed by the great political watershed of the first ever loss of the two remaining southern citadels in 1983. The common thread in all this narration is the midway point-cyclical-swing-door theory asserting itself as an articulation of the search for alternatives, for change, not merely the illusion of it.

The third major theme has at its centre the new assertion of the constituents of the Indian Union. It is about a redefinition of the Centre-State relationship, about federalism as it has developed. Indeed, about what constitutes the Indian nation.

Our concept of 'nationhood' was, and continues to be, amorphous; an almost intangible, near philosophical, sub-conscious acceptance, rooted in a mythical past. Whenever an attempt has been made to give it shape, it has invariably been in the imagery of what has been, a re-creation and a recapturing. Some indefinable threads of barely recognised consciousness string all this together.

These threads, in the past, were largely the bindings of religious faith and a cultural continuity, which, in itself, had its roots in belief. The strength and weakness, both, lay precisely in this. Strength, because being an all pervading, shapeless whole, it defied both definition and capture. It, therefore, survived all the many centuries of foreign domination, largely intact, but also mainly in an introverted form. The ease with which we were periodically made subject was precisely because this consciousness of 'nationhood' was so loose. This was, and continues to be a weakness, because, when the central idea is cloud-like, the constituent droplets of that 'cloud' would, for sheer preservation, have to have a stronger 'cellular structure'.

The recently articulated desires by the constituent States of the Union for a more meaningful say in their own political, social and economic dispensation, are thus a natural development. If we treat them as an unacceptable load on our federal structure, they will, by a queer sympathetic vibration, become precisely that. If we play 'politics' with the urgings, then the response too shall become 'political'. If, however, we treat the opportunity of this great debate as a chance to break the encrusted ossification of our thought, then we would have met the challenge of change. For that, it would be necessary to understand that there is no centre without the States and no States without the centre. Also, that the centre is neither just Delhi, nor indeed the Congress Party and certainly not just an individual.

The last theme that we have to take into account in our attempts at identifying sub-continental themes,

is the recognition of valid political 'ideas'. The great Congress culture, which had inspired generations of Indians and had acted as an instrument of change, leading to the independence of the country, is finally and irrevocably dead. Neither can the fragmented 'true Congressmen' coalesce in any recognisable form, nor has the Congress spawned any offsprings. It is dead precisely because from being an instrument of change it has become the embodiment of an ugly status quo and congealed self-interest. From being an organisation of a revolutionary, inspired band of people, it has reduced itself to the corruption of the self-seeking. At its centre is now a void because there is no inspiring political idea left with it. As voids do not conceive, therefore, it has failed to give birth to the new. And if it has not been able to ensure continuity by progeny, then, it will certainly now perish. It has held the centre of the stage for long enough, its usefulness is over, its continued existence stultifies alternative growth, its departure will open windows closed for too long.

The other significant political idea on the Indian political scene is subscription to Marx, dialectical materialism and the various derivatives or mutants of that central political idea. In the views of its adherents, the people of India are ripe for subscription to it. The people, however, are considerably more reticent about the proposition. To them Marx offers no panacea. It is precisely because of this that Marxist doctrine has failed to find roots in this ancient land. For 35 years, the Communists have worked indefatigably in Telengana, yet in the recent elections in Andhra Pradesh, their rejection was as categorical and definitive as that of the Congress.

If they continue to rule in West Bengal, it is only because they have successfully submerged their 'Communist' nature under the more acceptable idea of a 'Bengali regional sentiment'. So also in the southern State of Kerala, where it appears that almost voluntarily, the Communists have accepted yet another regional role. This is not entirely a self-inflicted limitation, because

largely it is also an unarticulated recognition of a disabling reality. It will, therefore, determine the geographical spread of this idea in the sub-continental politics of the land.

The third major political thought in the country centres around the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is an assertion, in its most elementary form of what one could term as nationalist political activism.

Before we examine the BJP's position as a new nationalist culture, we would have to understand its genesis and its growth. For that a very brief word about the Bharatiya Jana Sangh would be necessary. It is so because whilst the BJP is certainly no longer the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, yet indisputably a number of the former members of it, though significantly not all, have joined the BJP. For some of them this transformation is a natural and welcome progression, reflective both of growth and of change. For others, the BJP is equally a progression of the 'Janata' idea rather than that of the Jana Sangh alone. The Janata linkage being of the recent past is better understood, whether in agreement or in dispute. Most observers, however, fail to place the earlier form in due perspective.

Early in this century, Hindu nationalism took new form largely as a reaction to the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims. Given the demographic structuring of undivided India, this was inevitable. Pure anti-British nationalism was by then already the domain of the Congress mass movement. The Congress, though professing otherwise, also largely stood for the Hindus. Electoral subscription to it by the Muslims of undivided India was never more than 5%. Therefore, to acquire distinction from it, the reaction had to have a greater kind of assertion of views. This was only a reflection of the Indian society as it then existed. Even within the Congress, there had been many strands of thought ranging from the archaic to the dewy eyed modern (then) day socialists.

In yet another sense, the seed of Pakistan 'was sown by the landed

Muslim gentry of the largest State of British India; U.P. If, therefore, in that sense Pakistan was the step-child of U.P., then there had to be a reaction within the heartland of India. This took many forms. There was at one time an organisation called the 'Hindu Mahasabha'. Then there were political groupings of indeterminate character which reflected even deeper mystical yearnings and styled themselves as 'Ram Rajya Parishad'. The very nomenclatures of these parties, which at one time or other, in independent India's political history, did not go entirely unnoticed, were denotive of the stirrings of Hindu consciousness. Dissatisfied with the inadequacy of such articulations and aspiring for a more comprehensible political doctrine, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh came into being. It was thus not unnatural that in the early years of the emergence of this party, its detractors attempted to dismiss its policies as being restricted to, 'Hindi-Hindu and Pakistan'.

There were strengths and weaknesses inherent in such beginnings. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh reflected them in its development through the years. Amongst its strengths was a dedicated and disciplined cadre of political activists and workers. To my mind, however, the Jana Sangh suffered from one fundamental conceptual weakness. Because it largely strived to articulate the aspirations of the Hindu, it suffered the electorally debilitating consequence of being termed as not 'secular'. (It is too tempting to digress on to a dissertation on the political misuse and exploitation of this word but that is not the theme of our present enquiry). The Jana Sangh did not sufficiently appreciate that the political unity of the Hindu, the basis of its activism, was an historically established myth; social reform of Hindu society being altogether a different matter. This conceptual disability had a compounding electoral effect. Mistakenly, to my mind, but quite often the imperative of the political mechanism is such that the illusion has greater potency than the real.

There is need here to digress even further and to express some con-

trary viewpoints. There are those who passionately believe that India's present ills are precisely because there has not been a 'Hindu renaissance'. It is for such a re-awakening that through history we have witnessed a number of reformist movements. The Arya Samaj and the RSS are only two of the latest manifestations of them. Its adherents speak of the amazing constancy and continuity of the Indian civilisation as ancient as that of Egypt, Greece and Rome, which on the other hand, have got lost in the sands of time.

The detractors meanwhile point out that this continuity is perhaps more on account of the fact that Indian society has remained largely static. They go further and ask whether the present strains being experienced by us are not on account of an inability of this ancient society to cope with the assault of an industrial age. Two further facts have to be recognised here. First, that India has in the past not had any such experience as a transformation of an ancient, agricultural society into an industrial one. The second, which holds the greatest challenge, is also of the greatest importance for the future. It has already been referred to earlier as a predominant theme in our sub-continental scene but bears repetition. It is the fact that the concept of 'nationhood' has largely been absent in Indian political thought. Whilst a political organism called a 'State' was implanted on India by the British, the concept of 'nation' has always remained largely amorphous.

This development of the Indian nation cannot be outside the tenets of 'Sanatan' thought. Of course, the Hindu must develop. But that is better achieved by an assertion of the liberal all-embraciveness of the noble concept, than by limiting its breadth of vision or by narrowing its application. This is an enormously complex and challenging task. It will call for a redefinition of the certainties with which we started on this great adventure of nation building. Democracy, as we have ended up 'practising' it; socialism, as we have debased it in selective application; secularism, as we have perverted it by its politicisation, will all

have to be redefined. We will then need the right instrument for effecting this change.

It is in this context that the place of the BJP as a new nationalist culture has to be judged. This, and in relation to the major political themes of the day. The BJP's strengths and its shortcomings have to be assessed on that conceptual canvas. Does it have at its centre the strength of an idea and is it evolutionary? I believe it does. There is renewed relevance of the kind of 'nationalism' which is the need of the day and for which the BJP stands. The BJP has evolved. It is the result of the growth of an idea, changing in its development to meet the requirement of an altering political challenge. It carries greater credibility about the tone and contents of its politics than other political organisations. It is least tainted by all that which currently debases our political scene.

In its evolution it has today emerged as the major political organisation representing 'nationalism' along with the ability to cope with burgeoning federalism. Its spine is strengthened by an active and ever expanding organisation of workers. It has an able, charismatic and proven leadership. It has rejected extremes as irrelevant and aspires for a centrist, consensus politics, the only kind which will have continued relevance. It has the potential to be the most powerful political organisation in the heartland of India.

The over-riding demand of the day is for change and the BJP will not only have to articulate that yearning, it will retain its relevance only by being the harbinger of it. It has to be the window of change, not just window dressing. This challenge of change will not be adequately met if the BJP does not work towards a renewed commitment to greater social equity and justice. Yet like any other political organisation the BJP would be grievously mistaken if it confused a possibility, a potential, with being an attainment by itself.

Confident of its strength, yet realistically aware, both of the challenge that the nation faces in

these grave days of decline and of the terrifying velocity of change, it is only just and proper that the BJP should have been the first amongst the non-Communist opposition parties to propound the idea of a National Democratic Front.

No matter from which angle we look at it, the nation, since independence has been governed by a coalition of interests. The Congress Party, even at the pinnacle of its strength, represented no more than an exercise in conflict management and in reconciliation of group interests. The all embracive umbrella of a single party name was no more than a cover. In the growth of the Indian polity, the replacement of the Congress would, therefore, necessarily require a coalition. India is too large and too disparate a nation to be contained within the neat frameworks of two party systems or such other borrowed simplicisms. Our diversity is sub-continental. Geographically the nation could well spread from Norway to Spain if transposed on the map of Europe. It would be an absurdity to think in terms of a two party system for the whole of Europe. It is a similar over-simplification to aspire towards that kind of rationalisation in our national context.

The 'coalition of interests' that the Congress represented is now to be replaced by yet another coalition; this time of parties subscribing to nationalism, democracy and to secular, modern thought. In that sense, the idea of a national democratic front is not a harking back either to the SVD days or to the loose federation that the Janata was. The national democratic front is an evolution from both these, as indeed from the recognition of the essential coalitional nature of the Congress Party. The BJP has been the first to articulate it because it carries a conviction that to be able to meet the challenge of the times, what is needed is a joint democratic effort. This, whilst retaining the strength of the individual identities of the constituents. That is the precise requirement of today. It is in that context that the BJP's primacy in the new nationalist politics and culture has to be recognised.

Threats to the polity

BASHIRUDDIN AHMED

ONE political axiom that can be derived from the experience of the Third World is that countries, even the most rickety, rarely fall apart; it is their political arrangements that, more often than not, go awry. We need to take note of this rule, particularly now that the concern in this country for its integrity seems to be acquiring the characteristics of a primeval fear. The cry of 'country in danger' can be as beguiling and as destructive of social values and institutions vital to the well-being and survival of a national community as the cry of 'faith in danger' often is.

This is not to suggest though that other values are higher than, or should have a priority over, the value of maintaining the nation's independence and its integrity whatever be the circumstances; the latter are and must always be our major concern. The point rather is that they should not be allowed to crowd out other social values and concerns from the public realm, especially when the facts on the ground provide no warrant for doing so.

We have crossed the Rubicon as far as the country's integrity is con-

cerned, though, unfortunately, the same cannot be said for our democratic political arrangements. The danger instead is that the latter will fail to do so. They would probably continue to operate for a long time in their present distorted condition, turning the country eventually into another of the political abominations that dot the Third World. The need is to avoid this from happening. I believe we can well do so provided we view internal and external dangers, real or potential, in a proper perspective. This paper attempts to set out such a perspective in the first part and elaborates on the apprehensions about the future of our polity in the second.

Associated with States today is, what Lawrence Ziring calls, a sense of 'inevitability'¹ about their survival. That this is not just an attractive concept is underlined by the persistence, as juridical entities, of the forty-odd States of Black Africa, despite their endemic political instability and, in some cases,

1. Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan: The Enigma of Political Development*, Dawson/Westview, London, 1980.

even the loss of control by their government over substantial segments of the country's territory and population for varying lengths of time. The primary reason for their survival, as some suggest, has been the success of international organizations in blocking the use of force to create new States, ensuring, thereby, the non-alterability of the territorial configuration they inherited at independence.²

To such 'post-imperial ordering devices', which help preserve existing States, should also be added the behaviour of the superpowers vis-a-vis other States. While the superpowers do seek and often succeed in installing rulers and regimes of their own choice they rarely, if ever, desire or attempt the destruction of existing States. Nor, it should be added, do they like others to do so. The present international system itself operates, in other words, to preserve existing States and prevent their truncation. That is why Bangladesh will probably remain for a long time, the lone example of a new State being formed at the cost of an existing one.

The persistence of the Indian State, on the other hand, does not rest merely on the dominance of such *status quoist* tendencies in the world system. There are other endogenous elements that tend to underwrite its survival. Among these is the absence of 'fault-lines' along which countries break when they do. It is not that Indian society is free of cleavages. Given its size and cultural diversity the country abounds in them, except that the major 'fault-lines' it once had do not exist any more. One of these was the Hindu-Muslim divide which took a heavy toll when the country was partitioned in 1947. The other was the 'official language' controversy which polarized the country in the fifties and the sixties around a pro-Hindi/anti-Hindi axis. The echoes of this controversy may still surface on occasion, but the issue

now lacks the potential it earlier had of jeopardizing national unity.

Other cleavages have been, and will remain, a source of social turbulence; no more. The demographics (size and location of the groups involved) of the existing religious, linguistic, regional, caste or tribe based cleavages simply preclude the possibility of their leading to the country's break-up the way the Hindu-Muslim differences did and the Hindi issue threatened to do. The pressures and conflicts associated with the existing cleavages are manageable, though not always without difficulty. However, if they are grossly mishandled or are cynically aggravated, the turbulence they generate can last much longer, producing thereby a severe disorientation in the operations of the polity. Assam and Punjab are two recent cases in point.

The oft noted infirmities of our political system notwithstanding, the coercive capacity of the Indian State is another major element that underwrites the country's integrity. Unlike in other countries of the Third World, there has been no whittling away of its core instruments, at least at the apex, or of its central role in regulating civil society after the colonial power withdrew. Admittedly, the British left behind a more fully developed State structure than they, or the other colonial powers, did elsewhere. This structure has not only survived but has also consolidated its dominant social role through the acquisition of additional coercive capacity. This fact is of vital importance, in the perspective particularly, of the existing cultural and social diversities in the country and the potential for turbulence associated with them.

This is not because the normal processes of a democratic polity cannot manage social conflicts. They can if the system is allowed to develop and function in terms of the logic inherent in its design. In fact, a healthy political system either pre-empts a social conflict from erupting or defuses its intensity and limits the damage from it to the national fabric, should it occur. But when social groups press unreason-

able claims and adopt intransigent attitudes, the political processes of the system are rarely effective in coping with the conflict that might arise. And when this happens it is the State's manifest power and the readiness to use it, should the need arise, which alone prevents the situation from getting out of hand. It will be an unenviable situation for a country to be in if the State lacks such a capacity and is also perceived to do so by the public. This, happily, is not the case with the Indian State.

Another element which operates to preserve India's integrity is the horizontal spread of economic ties and their increasing multiplicity, both territorially and across the various sectors of economic life and activity. The expansion of communications, the growth of industry and the change in the character of our agrarian economy over the years have all contributed to this transformation. While there are many unsatisfactory aspects to this transformation it has nevertheless helped bring into existence a truly national market for goods and services. It is a market no longer confined to urban areas, nor is it characterized any more by a low frequency of transactions or the traditional structural biases that once informed them.

One consequence is that, say, if Delhi cannot manage the country's food economy without Punjab, neither can Punjab sustain its agrarian economy, or the standards of living of its hardy people, without the rest of the country. The same, of course, is true of all other States, whether they are economically dynamic or not, or whether they produce primary goods or manufactures. This is the kind of structural compulsion which holds a country more effectively together than the coercive power of the State can on its own.

To this positive element must be added another, viz, the long lasting consensus on the constitution and the structures of governance it established. Though this fact is often taken for granted by many, it stands in stark contrast to the experience of most other countries of the Third World. They have either not been

2. Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, 'Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical', *World Politics*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, October 1982, pp. 1-24.

able to frame a constitution or, if they did, to keep it for long. Closer home, Pakistan, which became independent the same time we did, exemplifies this phenomenon best and so does the relatively new State of Bangladesh. Even Sri Lanka failed to sustain the consensus on its constitution after operating it for almost thirty long years. It switched in 1978 from a Westminster-style of cabinet government and 'first-past-the-post' elections to a presidential type of government, modelled on the French pattern, and a party-list system of proportional representation. The main argument for this change was the need to do away with governmental instability.

In India, on the other hand, those who espouse such views have not been able to make much headway. The efforts they made earlier were soon abandoned. There could well be efforts of this kind in the future, especially if exaggerated notions of threats to the well-being of the nation and its existence get a free reign.

Nationalism is an essential element in the making of new States. The invention of new polities, to put it in Clifford Geertz's words, implies 'the invention of new peoples'. But, nationalism also contains the potential of turning into a pathology as it did once in Europe and is doing now in the Third World. Its primary function in the latter no longer is that of producing and reinforcing a 'popular sense of self-regard'. Instead, it is being used chiefly to legitimize regimes and rulers who have little else otherwise to ensure their survival.

When nationalism becomes the only source of regime of governmental legitimacy, it is then that governments become 'representative in the sense that symbols represent' and not in the sense associated ordinarily with political systems based on elections and parliaments.³ This might well happen, if it has not already happened in our polity as well.

3. Clifford Geertz, 'The Judging of Nations: Some Comments on the Assessment of Regimes in the New States', *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1977, p. 251.

II

Better to be ruled like hell by Filipino's than like heaven by Americans', is what Osmena reportedly once said.⁴ This was, undoubtedly, a potent sentiment. It fuelled, in the Philippines, as its appropriately worded versions did elsewhere, a successful movement for liberation from colonial domination.

But the conviction with which it was voiced everywhere appears in retrospect to have been somewhat inappropriate. While the indignities and iniquities of subjection to foreign rule may have ended in the new States, not much else has changed. Rather, in many the change has been for the worse with a depressingly large number of the new States tending to be more like Mobutu's Zaire than Nehru's India.

In many of them, there are virtually no effective norms or institutions to ensure the people's well-being, to protect and promote collective national interests, or to enforce the accountability of the rulers to the ruled. That such regimes are autocracies or oligarchies characterized by high-handed styles of governance and the absence often of most, if not all, public liberties is only one side of the existential reality. The other and more horrifying is what such regimes have done to the societies they govern. Their style of conducting public affairs has debased social life by promoting cunning and deception, suspicion and mistrust, sycophancy and lack of self-respect and a readiness among an increasing number of their people to engage in acts otherwise considered obnoxious and reprehensible. This was done by making the well-being and, often, the very survival of groups and individuals contingent on their having such orientations and patterns of behaviour.

As a result, their peoples have been prevented from evolving into a civil society and a national community with such shared norms and values without which it is not possi-

ble, for either individuals or collectivities, to have a meaningful and satisfying existence. What has emerged instead is a situation in which what passes for a society is no more than congeries of individuals and groups 'separately dependent' on the leader and the regime over which he presides.

This has, mercifully, not been our fate. It need never be if the basic norms and institutions of our polity are not allowed to atrophy any further, given the distortions that have entered the system over the years. Some of these are an unavoidable consequence — the end product — of economic development and social change. Others have crept in, perhaps, as much due to a lack of political wisdom as due to a conscious decision to undercut institutions and violate established norms of public life.

However, the design of our political system has in it the necessary self-correcting mechanisms. Fortunately, these continue to be in a working condition despite the other infirmities in the system. Additionally, the civil society retains, for the greater part, a remarkable degree of resilience for coping with political conditions hostile to its existence. To this it is now adding a growing capacity to prevent social and political decay, by both protecting the values central to the sustenance of a political order that is just, fair and decent and by promoting a commitment to them among increasingly larger sections of the public.

There is no better evidence of this than the inability of the major national parties to sustain public support for long, or, conversely, the manner in which parties and leaders perceived to be in consonance with the dominant moral and political sensibilities of the public are swept into office. We have seen this happen repeatedly since 1971. In the election that year Mrs. Gandhi's new Congress gained a massive majority of seats in the Lok Sabha. This was followed by its sweep in the elections to State assemblies in 1972. In 1977 the newly formed Janata Party was catapulted into

4. Reported in *Ibid.*, p. 250.

power, with Mrs. Gandhi-winning hands down again in 1980. The latest and the most striking example of this phenomenon, of course, is the success of N.T. Rama Rao, a total outsider to politics, and his hurriedly assembled party, the Telugu Desam and that too against not a puny party and an unknown leader, but the Congress(I) with the Prime Minister of the country, Mrs. Gandhi, as its chief campaigner.

When it comes to restoring the health of a political system, the people can only do so much. The ultimate step or steps that translate public pressures for change into systemic reality are the ones that those in power alone can take. It is difficult to say why the requisite steps have not been taken so far, or on the scale required. Is it because the rulers are prisoners of the prevailing circumstances, or is it that they prefer not to? It could well be that both the reasons are in operation jointly, with their respective weights in the combination varying in time and in relation to the kind of changes required in the system. Whatever be the reasons, the delay is producing conditions in our society and polity which even those responsible for the delay would (or should) wish to avoid. Otherwise the rest of the country could well go the way Bihar already has.

The conditions there are abominable enough to place Bihar in the company of a Zaire or a Haiti than that of any of our other States. Political institutions in Bihar have virtually ceased to perform the functions normally associated with them. Instead, the governmental apparatus there has turned predatory. Many among those holding office, whether political or administrative, high or low, invariably use their positions to prey upon Bihar society.

As I write this I have in mind, of course, the Bhagalpur blindings, the mafia rule in Dhanbad, the Bobby murder and other such distressing facts. But I also have before me a dispatch from the Patna Special Correspondent of the *Hindu*, which describes a phenomenon incomparably less dramatic than any men-

tioned above. It says: 'Incredible things are happening in Bihar as an offshoot of the all-pervasive corruption. The craze for the fast buck among officials and politicians has eroded the credibility and sanctity of the competitive examinations held by the Bihar Public Service Commission for recruitment to the State administrative and police services.'

'Serious malpractices have been reported also in the competitive examinations held by the newly constituted Junior Public Service Commission for recruitment to class three posts...

'That jobs, degrees and certificates can be obtained for a consideration in Bihar is no secret. Police constables are allegedly appointed for a consideration of Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 15,000 each.'

The despatch then mentions an instance in which 30 candidates who had failed at an examination were included in the list of successful candidates. Even while protests were being registered by the candidates adversely affected, overtures were being made to them to pay for appointment to the posts involved.

Three attempts to have the Chief Minister institute a probe into the malpractices at the PSC drew a blank from him. According to the *Hindu*, he 'expressed his inability to interfere in the affairs of the Service Commissions', which as the report notes, have on them 'some discredited politicians and hangers on of the ruling politicians as its Chairmen and members.'

The Governor of the State and the Chairman of the Commission, approached in the matter, have likewise done nothing. Nor has the resort to a mass fast at Gandhi Maidan, by the candidates, produced any results. Even the Patna High Court, which recently had a petition before it for quashing the results, has done no more than ask the State Government to probe into the charges of irregularity made in the petition.

With all avenues available in the State for the redressal of their griev-

vances turning out to be ineffective, the candidates have now gone to the Prime Minister, submitting to her a memorandum earlier this month.

The significance of this report from the *Hindu*⁵ is that it ties together phenomena often noted separately. This helps underline the basic character of the political malaise in Bihar which is the total collapse of public institutions in the State. If there still is a semblance of law and order in Bihar and if the government still goes through the motions of governance, it is only because the State happens to be part of a larger and mostly functioning Indian polity. Otherwise, what Bihar has witnessed is the 'progressive implosion of public life', much the way the weak States of Africa have.

Where does one place Bihar in the Indian context? Does it represent a unique experience or is it an extreme case of conditions in the rest of the polity? However comforting it might be to take Bihar as unique, it is hard to do so. Some of the symptoms that make for the 'Bihar syndrome' exist in other States too, and so do the signs of erosion of the 'procedural order'. That is, the virtual abrogation of established rules and procedures in all sectors of the system — political, administrative and judicial — and at every level, with invidiousness and caprice in the exercise of power taking their place.

Such a denouement was brought about in Bihar gradually. Rules and procedures were first bent to suit the private interests of some, then openly modified and changed. The cumulative effect was to produce, ultimately, a political and administrative ambience in which rules and procedures that still existed could be violated openly and with impunity. In the event, Bihar appears only to be holding a mirror to our future.

III

With the over-all situation in the country being marked by the nastiness of the on-going ethnic conflicts and the strained Centre-State relations getting worse there is, quite

understandably, a growing sense of unease in the country about its political future. Such a sense is sustained, among other things, by the State of our party system. There are signs of serious impairment of the health of the Congress(I), the centrepiece so far of the party system.

The endemic factionalism in it remains intractable, its organizational structure in considerable disrepair and its support base constantly shifting and in danger of grievous erosion. To this must be added the non-existence of a viable national political formation, or of any firm indications of its appearance. Should the Congress(I) fail electorally or politically, without an alternative in a position to take over, the strains on the polity could well get far more severe than they are presently.

And yet what is needed is not the mere survival of the Congress(I) as the dominant party or the creation of an alternative to it through resort to any mode or means to ensure either, but for those engaged in this regard, to do so by correcting the distortions in the system noted above.

If this is not done and political power is obtained or retained by promoting and/or using reprehensible methods or exploiting primeval fear in the public, then the gain, if any, will be of those who succeed and not of the polity. But, parties tend to be unmindful of such considerations. What matters most in the thick of the fray, whether political or electoral, is success. And if the conditions on the ground permit them to register successes by doing the wrong things they will be loathe to do the right. That such a situation of choice should not be allowed to exist is vital. Otherwise, the much needed correctives in the system will not be applied in time.

This may well turn out to be the case, given the spread of unreasonable fears in large sections of the public. In that event, the entire polity might end up, before long, where Bihar already is. This, more than anything else, is the real threat to the country and its aspirations for not only a strong polity but also one which is just, fair and decent.

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Books

INDIA: NATURE OF SOCIETY AND PRESENT CRISIS by Baren Ray. Intellectual Book Corner, 1983.

'IT is easy to ask oneself where our country is going, but quite difficult to answer it', says P.N. Haksar in his foreword to Baren Ray's book. Indeed, the task is even more daunting when far-ranging issues like the mechanism of underdevelopment, the role of the State sector, harijan exploitation and South-South cooperation are all sought to be clubbed together in one book. The reader is left a little confused by the sheer variety of subjects covered, but there definitely remains a line of reason in Ray's work that ensures a semblance of continuity.

The author is an unabashed leftist with the courage to take the conventional political position expected of him and every issue he examines benefits from the analytical skills at his command. The book is refreshing in that it represents the exuberant outpourings of the committed mind. Ray insists, for example, that 'the problem of extreme poverty in the countryside, the problem of opening up of the vast rural market, the problem of carrying out radical agrarian reforms, the problem of the abolition of caste-based discrimination and exploitation are not only related, but absolutely inseparable.' The same

rigour of analysis is used where Ray examines the possible results of the massive agricultural surplus. He concludes that this will be obtained only if the carrots and sticks he proposes are handled effectively and the result will surely be the generation of the export surplus economy.

The peregrinations that Ray undertook in his three decades of work on third world problems and analysis in his role as representative on the Afro-Asian Peace Solidarity Organisation, gives him insights into the international situation too. He insists that the 'showcase success stories of Taiwan and Korea will be totally inapplicable in the Indian context. Having detailed the social structures in our own country, Ray feels justified in insisting that because of the strength and tenacity of the old structures, unfettered capitalism pursuing the profit motive based on foreign investments will never yield the take-off path that can break the vicious circle of Indian poverty.

Ray is modest enough and realistic enough to understand that the social structures he advocates require factors and conditions that do not exist currently. He believes that only constant intervention at the grass-roots level can transform the old structures and carry out the new tasks of social renewal and transformation. Though himself involv-

ed with the communist movement in the country, Ray acknowledges, albeit hesitantly, that the Indian communist movement does not comprehend the enormity and acuteness of the Indian problem.

So far so good. However, perhaps because he has strung together a series of articles, Ray tends to get repetitive even to the committed. Surely, Ray's target audience is meant to be far larger than the small coterie of communist analysts. The book would have made a greater impact if he had ensured that the analysis did not repeat itself.

Dilip Cherian

INDIA'S ROAD TO NATIONHOOD: A Political History of the Sub-Continent by Wilhelm Von Pochhammer. New Delhi, Allied Publishers.

THE author of the work under review, Wilhelm Von Pochhammer, served in India between 1924 and 1957 as a member of the German Foreign Service. During his stay he met many leading Indian personalities who shaped India's political history. But this did not make an historian out of him, and he retired in 1957 as a diplomat after which he wrote this book. From a reading of it, it seems that this effort also failed in making an historian out of him.

Although the sub-title of the book clearly states that the work is a political history of the sub-continent, one is still taken aback by Pochhammer's resolute pen which writes of little else but of the historical figures and dynasties that came and went in a now well-known order of succession in India. Except for some mention of the periodic disturbances that occurred along the trade routes and the paucity of precious metals for coinage, Pochhammer's work has hardly anything to say about the social history of India. After putting away this book one might be encouraged to believe, as many believed 30 years ago, that Indian society remained basically unchanged over two millennia, until the arrival of the British. It must however be granted that all the known dynasties, emperors, pretenders, usurpers, adventurers and politicians find mention in this volume. The political history of south India also takes up a good many pages, but, as was current over two decades ago, it only begins with its encounter with the empires of the Gangetic plain.

But this book of over 600 pages has some distinctive characteristics that need to be noted. Pochhammer is quite clearly with the Hindus against the Muslims. With Qutbuddin Aibak, he believes that the Muslims for the first time sponsored a religion which was not Indian in origin. It almost appears as if Pochhammer were pointing to a breach of etiquette. The Muslims, he holds, also 'petrified' Hindu culture by their fanatical intolerance of this ancient religion which led the Hindus towards excessive ritualism since this was the only way left for them to assert their identity. If Pochhammer had recalled the *Smritis* and the *Puranas* when writing

this section he would perhaps not have been so sure in dating the 'petrification' of Hindu culture to the period following Muslim domination in India.

The second distinctive feature of this book is the importance the author places on foreign policy, or the lack of it, in determining the rise and fall of several kingdoms. In this connection he makes the observation that the Himalayas lulled the Indian rulers into a state of complacency, and that this is why they were always unprepared for invasions through the Himalayan passes.

The third distinctive point made is the belief that the Indian Nationalists were to some extent responsible for the gradual hardening of colonial policy in India. If the Nationalists had exhibited a little more sympathy with the British policy of giving India Dominion Status 'step by step', then probably Independence would have been won 20 years earlier. Pochhammer frowns upon the Congress' reaction to the Simon Commission, and also upon the Nationalist slap leather reaction to the Rowlett Act.

Nehru is believed to have contributed to the disenchantment of the Muslim League with the Congress by his 1946 press conference, and also by his directive that Muslim League members not be given cabinet positions after the first election. This, Pochhammer opines, was against the spirit of the Round Table Conference resolutions. Quite distinctively, again, neither Gandhi nor Nehru take up too much space in this book, notwithstanding the author's photograph with Nehru in the opening pages.

Pochhammer's volume, as political history, has surprisingly little to say on the various uprisings, both urban and rural, that occurred in the period 1920-1950, and the role these uprisings played in shaping both British and Nationalist policies. He barely mentions the contentious political and constitutional issues that existed between the British and the Nationalists and slurs over the questions of federation, separate electorates and diarchy when examining the posture affected by either party. Neither does he analyse the pattern of industrial development inaugurated by the British in India and its policy implications. The reviewer is particularly surprised by the fact that though John Cotton's name is mentioned, his debate with George Hamilton on 'Railway vs. Irrigation' finds no place in this book. A glance at the Hansard volumes might have remedied this lapse. As such lapses abound in this book it would perhaps not be incorrect to conclude that it is hardly meant for the serious historian.

Dipankar Gupta

IMPERILLED FRONTIERS : India's North-Eastern Borderlands by Nari Rustomji. Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983.

NARI RUSTOMJI believes in noble savages. If he were to have his way, the tribals of the north-east

would be left in splendid isolation to develop as relics in an anthropological museum. The army of development experts and economists would be sent packing with their camp followers and the administrators would stay on only to keep a benevolent eye on law and order and prop up the tribal ways.

It is an attractive argument and it has many adherents. Indeed, Rustomji is faithful to the views propounded by the social scientist, Dr. Verrier Elwin, the grand old man of the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) whose works on the tribals are more or less the last word — and frequently the only word — on the people of the area. And though Elwin never actually ruled, he wielded enormous influence just by his mere presence in NEFA until the day he died in 1964. Some indication of Elwin's clout can be had from the fact that he was one of the key members of the panel which selected officers for the Indian Frontier Administration Service (IFAS).

All through the book Rustomji harps on this one theme and there may well be a germ of truth in these arguments. In the past 20 years, administrators have worked on the principle that economic backwardness was the root cause of unrest in the North-east. In consequence, the main effort has been to overrun the region with roads and rural electrification projects with a bit of education thrown in for good measure.

In *Imperilled Frontiers*, this argument is stood on its head. Rustomji argues that it is these very economic projects which have led to unrest. While the intentions behind introducing them may have been worthy, their end result has been to obliterate tribal ways of life. And over time the outsiders who have penetrated the region to implement these projects have come to be regarded as invaders out to pillage a culture.

He does not mince words about this and at one point even goes to the extent of saying, 'the tribals do not favour an excess of outsiders in their land, any more than Indians generally favoured a British presence.' He keeps driving this home over and over again, saying at another point, 'If there has been a failure it has been in the inadequate appreciation of man's instinctive resentment against interference in his inherited and accustomed way of life, however crude and uncivilised it may appear to others.'

Rustomji is nothing if not a man of moderation. In every field he preaches restraint. He cites the example of Nagaland and berates the army for its get-tough tactics with the insurgents, which he claims can only lead to endless trials of strength which stop only occasionally when the insurgents pause to regroup. Even more damaging is the ruthless policy of grouping villages together which callously uproots villagers from their land. At times they are regrouped thoughtlessly, making it practically impossible for them to tend to their crops.

Worse still, there have been countless cases where the tribals have lost their land after being shifted.

There can be no doubt that the author knows the region well. At one time or other he has held practically every important government post worth holding in the area. He has held the key job of Adviser to the Governor of the North-eastern Frontiers and he has also been prime minister of Sikkim and adviser to the King of Bhutan. In spite of all this, Rustomji sounds more the well-meaning amateur than the hardened administrator.

He himself recounts that at one time when he was Commissioner for Hills in Assam and counselling moderation, he was put on the police list of 'security risks'. And while his arguments can scarcely be faulted he does not offer many solutions. In Nagaland he merely says that it will take many years before the scars left by the insurgency are healed. He also ignores the fact that government long ago abandoned Elwin's theories and forged ahead with development work. What is once done cannot easily be undone. And, besides, the pressure from the local people who have not shown themselves averse to material benefits, can hardly be ignored. But in the final analysis the author cannot be faulted when he laments the lack of knowledge among elite Indians and says, 'there is no more a "tribal problem," than there is an "Indian problem".'

P. Balakrishnan

ESSAYS ON SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA by A.R. Kamat. Somaiya Publications, 1983.

EXPLORING the dynamic of political, economic and social changes in India over the last century and a half in a realistic and useful manner requires the use of a conceptual frame-work that is possibly different from what Kamat calls 'misconceived western conceptualisations based on...colonial imperialism.'

Kamat who has spent several years working on aspects of education in the Indian context now extends his field of study to the examination of the changes in Indian society during the years of British rule and, more importantly, to the post-independence era. Noting that discussions on social change in recent times have hovered between those that carefully skirt around the possibility of 'social revolution' to those that depend on institutional changes of the kind Myrdal postulated, Kamat finds that using the dialectical-historical method makes more sense. He feels that, 'the dialectical-historical method helps us in understanding the broad sweep of the historical process at work in the world of yesterday and today, takes into consideration the historical evolution of a given society, focuses attention on the areas of conflicts and contradictions in its structural and cultural set-up, analyses the resulting movement, and tries to visualize the possibilities in the immediate and post-immediate, desirable future, together with authentic, creative action or praxis towards its realization.'

While neither Kamat's approach nor his consequences are startling in their newness, the only comfort the book provides is the fact that it allows the reader to work within the methods Kamath has chosen and judge its applicability even within the limited frame-work of facts that are chosen no doubt with some element of bias.

However, there is no doubt that Kamat's detailed analysis of the Maharashtrian situation is thorough and systematic. Political developments in Maharashtra since the formation of the State in 1960 yield results that are useful both because of the similarity between Maharashtra and most modern Indian States, and because where the differences arise, they can be traced, thanks to Kamat's detailed work, to their likely causes.

The disturbing feature of such a study is in its tendency to give a garb of pseudo-scientific rigour to what is essentially only a basis for further analysis. Without considerable more rigour and inclusion of important political variables, Kamat's study of thirty years of independence must of necessity remain rather meaningless. It is well to make statements of the kind 'moreover, although the nineteen-month political emergency ended more than five years ago, the "permanent economic emergency" still remains with us, along with the acute misery and discontent of the mass of the people.' The question however remains of whether the semblance of stability that Kamat insists exists today is only perception or actual reality. In any case, in what direction are we heading — utter chaos or confused continuity?

Jagdish Seans

POLICY MAKING IN INDIA: An Approach to Optimisation by Krishan Saigal. Vikas Publishing House.

KRISHAN SAIGAL, a career administrator, has the professional qualifications (he is an MBA) to enable him to place his own experiences within a theoretical framework. However, as administrators are often wont to, the study of policy making tends to be rather over-theorised. In a conscious attempt to avoid working with models that are predominantly oriented towards the social functioning of traditional western civilisations, the author has developed 'a normative model of the Indian system' to understand how appropriate policies can steer society towards a desired direction.

Governmental policy making becomes important with the expanded role that government has appropriated for itself; there is an absence of more conventional and traditional societal structures to deal with the new elements that enter into the every day life of citizens today. The need to have suitable devices to deal with programmes like the exploration of outer space, deep sea farming and environmental control, for example, are needs that have emerged as vital in the modern world.

The author insists that 'policy making in India has to take place in the context of a complex and variegated society. This society has its own fundamentals, its own compulsions, and its own inner dynamics. The ambitious goals set for society have put it in a state of flux and change. The goals of national reconstruction, including abolition of poverty, have led to rising expectations and generated the need for rapid and orderly change. But any national advance has to be viewed within a framework of parameters flowing from: (1) India being a democratic country, a very poor country and, until recently, a subjugated country; and (2) India being a country of vast size and population giving it a continental polity with its various regions, language groups, cultural units, minorities, etc.'

Saigal then goes on to develop his new version of the Indian societal system model and evolves 25 recurrent cycles — 13 in the internal and 12 in the external sphere. This kind of cyclical model was also used by P.N. Rastogi with the 'institutional and cybernetic approach' and Saigal attempts to expand the concept, adding variables from the external environment along with internal aspects like, for example, insurgency and R & D.

Despite this attempt to introduce increased rigour into the analysis, Saigal ends up making rather general and somewhat pompous comments. Here is a particularly illustrative example in the chapter on knowledge: 'education is intrinsically valuable not because it is concerned with knowledge, facts and theories, norms and measures, but because it provides us with the ethics of knowledge; not because it informs us the findings of a truth-seeker, but because it inspires us to proceed on our path of truth-seeking and, in so inspiring, lays the foundation of an individual in modernity!'

There are some interesting observations however. Isolating the key factor to ineffective management techniques within the administration, Saigal says that administrators do not deliver the goods since the system works to the rule that 'accountability is not for results but the faithful application of rules and regulations.' The solution that Saigal sees to the optimisation problems in this kind of a situation is one where audits are replaced by the means of ensuring greater information flow between decision and policy making bodies; where the shared information relates to experiences and where success or failure can be traced in relation to decisions taken in the intermediate stages.

The other important change that Saigal advocates is for increased integration in the process of policy making whereby overall goals rather than sectoral goals are emphasised, where the environment is explicitly included as a variable and where an empty 'satisficing' process is replaced by optimisation solutions.

As one step towards the attainment of some of the laudable goals that Saigal sets for the nation, a study of this kind by an administrator, may go a

little way in assisting the re-education of his own administrator colleagues.

Dilip Cherian

MODERNIZATION AND COMMUNITY POWER

by Murli M. Sinha. Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1983.

THE study of power and its exercise over human organisations is a difficult task. When an attempt is made to focus attention on the determinants of power within a closed loop system — like a village — there are some obvious advantages but the danger of mis-interpretation of factors that create influence and channelise power could even more easily be confused. Sinha, who has tried to study community power and its evolution within an environment where modernisation has its own role, has used the detailed observation of two villages to reach his conclusions.

The questions that Sinha has attempted to answer are difficult and, quite expectedly, the answers have been divergent. This perhaps confirms the view of most scholars that while rigorous examination of sociological phenomena in a detailed manner could be useful, the results are rarely of the kind that can, without substantial modifications, be extended to several other similar social organisms.

Sinha examines the following problems:

1. What kinds of individuals and other collectivities have what sources of power?
2. To what degree is leadership concentrated?
3. What means or instruments are used to exert power in power relationships?

He insists that 'these questions have been studied in conjunction with the various modernizing elements extensively introduced since the independence of the country in 1947. In other words, this study sets out to explore the impact of modernization on both the structural attributes of rural communities and on individual aspiration for change. Furthermore, the above-mentioned questions have also been examined in relation to those factors which are related to the "vertical-axis" of community organizations, i.e., the relationship of local communities to various extra-community organisations and institutions.'

The limitations to Sinha's study are fairly obvious. There is, at the very start, the existing controversy regarding the appropriate technique that should be used to study community power. The debate about whether reputational or decisional methods should be used has not yet quite been resolved. Almost expectedly Sinha has used what he calls a 'judicious combination of the two'. Again, there seems to be an inbuilt bias within any method of selecting the issues or decisions that are studied and considerable scope exists for any researcher to fall into the trap of utilising issues that are tractable. Again, the impact of extra community involvement in influential

and in-community decisions can hardly be fully appreciated without considerable expansion of the scope of the study.

While seeking to work out indices of power concentration, the extent of usefulness that mathematical formulations have in such studies is probably overstated. What is useful is the details which Sinha has, of necessity, gone into. He has gathered data on traditional subjects like changes of traditional caste occupation and distribution of families by occupation. In keeping with his efforts to study the impact of modernization, Sinha has also examined and obtained data on the role of mass media exposure, urban travel and governmental development offices to the older patterns of behaviour in traditionally organised villages.

In seeking to obtain details of the kind that Sinha has attempted, it is not surprising that several conclusions emerge which are naturally contradictory when extended beyond the boundaries of any one village. However, while these limitations are recognised, Sinha makes the appropriate sociological noises about the changing power structure, the emerging new elite and shifts in bargaining power among groups in rural India.

In the light of increasing importance being paid to governance at the grass roots level, studies of the kind that Sinha has ventured will no doubt be useful. While it is unlikely that any concrete results will emerge about the nature of the end result, some aspects of the dynamics that the system must go through are made clearer as a result of such enquiries.

Mahua Sengupta

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 1980 by G.G. Mirchandani. Vikas Publishing House, 1981.

ASSEMBLY Elections 1980 deals essentially with Centre-State relations, particularly after the Congress split of 1969. The author analyses the reasons for repeated mid-term polls, in nine States in 1977 and again in 1980 when seven of those States had already faced mid term elections in 1977. He also discusses the psychological impact of election speeches and election symbols of various political parties on the electorate which greatly affect the final outcome.

Mirchandani makes a highly controversial point in the very first chapter of the book, 'Why the Elections'. He believes that the failure of development plans has been especially due to political instability and that political stability is the necessary pre-condition for economic development. This is undoubtedly true but not the whole truth, for political stability alone can't be sufficient as a condition for rapid economic growth. The basic cause for the failure of plans in India has been the lack of trade-off between the objectives of the plans and their implementation. If a plan does not give due weightage to various objectives, its implementation will become impossible. So, the cause for the

failure of the plans is more attributable to lack-lustre implementation than to political instability.

The book succeeds admirably in reflecting public opinion on various political issues in the recent past. With the help of illustrations it tries to put across the need for amendments in the constitution to check the emergency powers of the President as also to vest more authority in Governors whose functions have grown enormously due to the changing complexion of Indian politics.

It is a well known fact that Indian politicians are intoxicated by the exuberance of their own verbosity and they seem to do nothing after they win. In a country where 70% of the population is still in agriculture and 50% below the poverty line, election speeches about reducing poverty, prices and at the same time increasing employment opportunities have a deep effect on the voter. But then it is outside the capacity of the politician to reduce poverty, prices or unemployment. The writer feels that it is not possible to reduce prices in India as inflation is a global phenomenon.

The data compiled by the UNI and HCL and appended to the book makes good reading for those who want more detailed analysis. The basic conclusion is that Congress acceptability to the masses arises from its organisational unity and absence of discordant voices in matters of policy. The Janata government lacked this ingredient very much. Another conclusion one can draw from this data relates to the fact that the Leftist parties who forged fronts in Kerala and West Bengal seem to have impressed the people of those States with their unity and sense of purpose.

In a nutshell, the book presents a clear and complete picture of the election process in India in its constitutional, political and popular aspects and commends itself to all types of readers.

Atul Nagi

INDUSTRY & LABOUR : An Introduction by

E.A. Ramaswamy and Usha Ramaswamy. Oxford University Press, College and University level text (CULT), 1981.

THE authors view the problem of industrial relations as a social phenomenon which requires a multi-disciplinary approach involving economics, sociology, politics, psychology and history. They have suggested that the book be read preferably chapter by chapter and have classified chapters into three groups from the point of view of the above logic. The first three chapters deal with trade union theory and the problems of Indian trade unions. The last four chapters deal with the problem of industrial conflict, collective bargaining and workers participation.

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To increase labour productivity, labour must be committed to industry, i.e., it should not be of a seasonal kind, taking work during the off season for

agriculture and going back to the fields during the agricultural season. The authors do not agree with the findings of the Royal Commission on Indian Labour which stated that Indian labour was not committed to industry and had not developed an industrial culture. In fact the authors complain that the situation is just the opposite today: 'It is almost impossible to get a permanent factory worker to quit.'

The authors feel that the trade unions have a political as well as industrial role to perform. Marx emphasised that the trade unions would, through mass strikes, bring about the collapse of capitalism, but this has not happened. American trade unions are often held out as examples of non-political organisations. This is true formally but does not mean that they are not interested in politics. They have systematically extended support to Democratic candidates in presidential elections. The authors rightly state that the American unions constitute the exception rather than the rule in this regard.

In England, trade unions are politicalized and so also in India. Even if, as in England, the government is formed by the Labour Party, the identity of the unions remain separate and all the actions of the trade unions are not liked by the government. Of course, the Labour Government did facilitate a wage freeze some years ago.

In India, the multiplicity of trade unions has resulted in the problem of how to decide on the bargaining agent. The multiplicity has also led to making unreasonable demands on the management. The authors have analysed the reason for the number of man days lost from 1951 to 1975 (page 221) and have found that non-economic causes are more important than economic causes. The causes grouped under 'others' mainly relate to disputes arising out of the non-recognition of trade unions and inter union rivalry.

The problem in the non recognition of trade unions is how to decide the majority trade union; whether it should be decided through secret ballot or through verification made by a government department or some other agency still remains a controversial question. The Industrial Disputes Act is also regarded by the authors as impeding the development of collective bargaining in India. It results in government intervention through reconciliation or adjudication right at the inception of the dispute itself. Workers participation was tried during the Emergency and still continues in some industries. The authors have discussed workers participation in other countries but have not touched upon its growth in the Indian context.

The book is written in an interesting style, is easily readable, and gives much information on industrial relations in theory and practice in India and other countries.

Aditya Khanna

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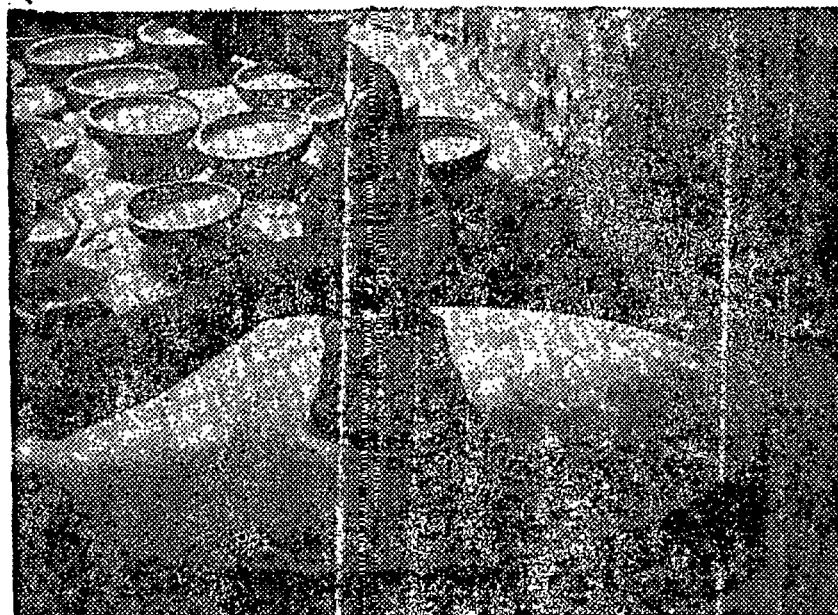


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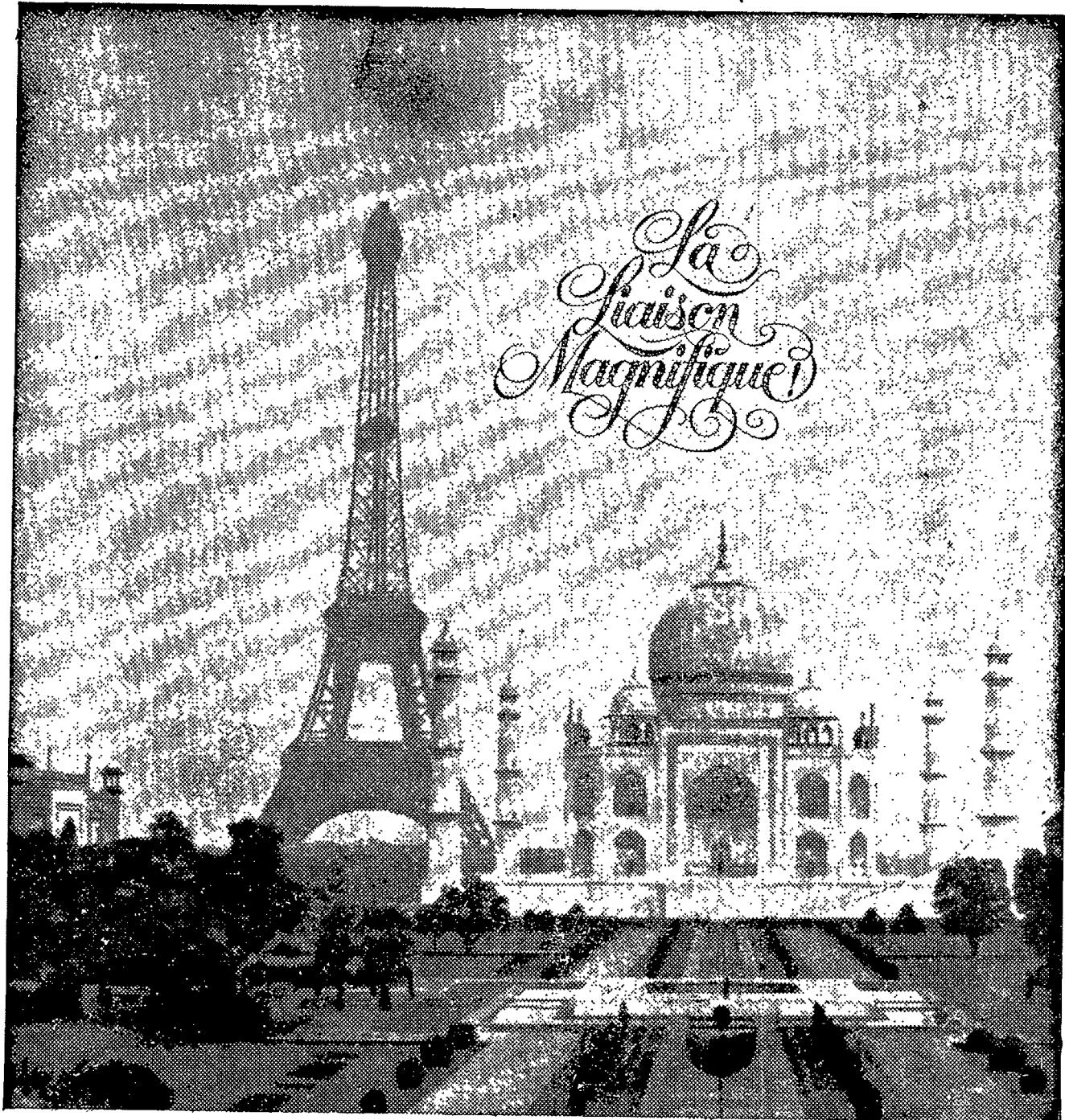
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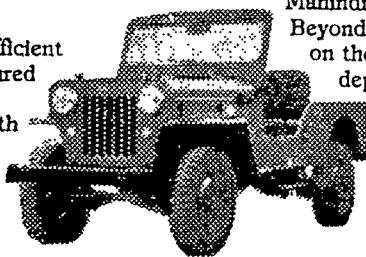


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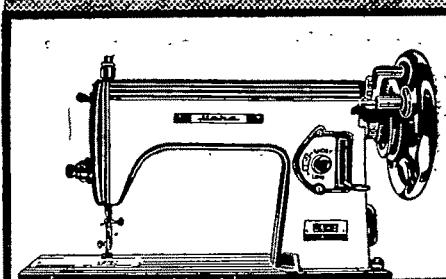
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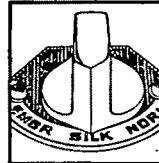
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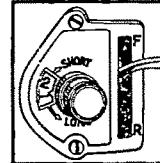
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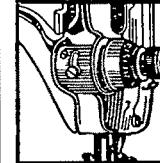
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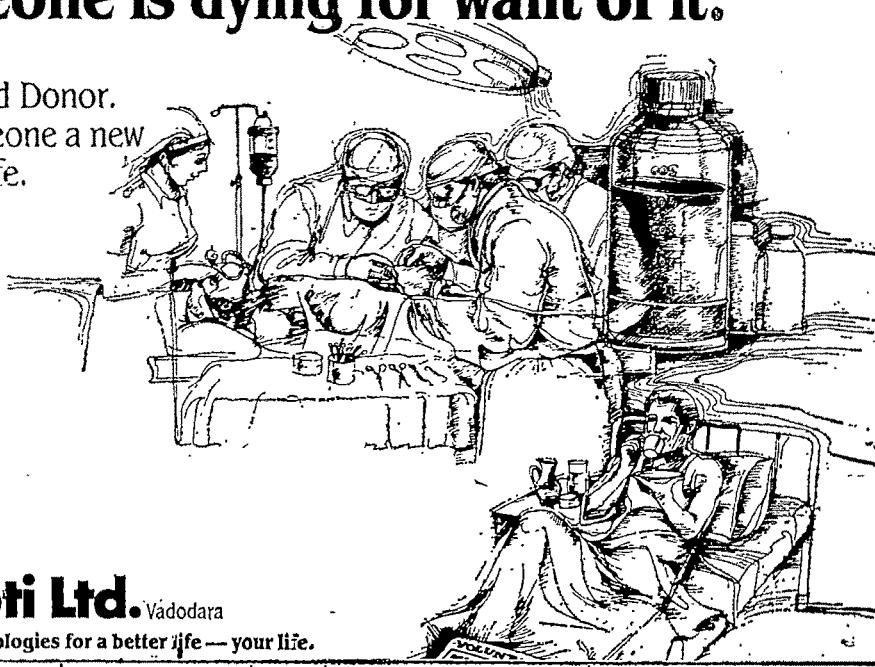
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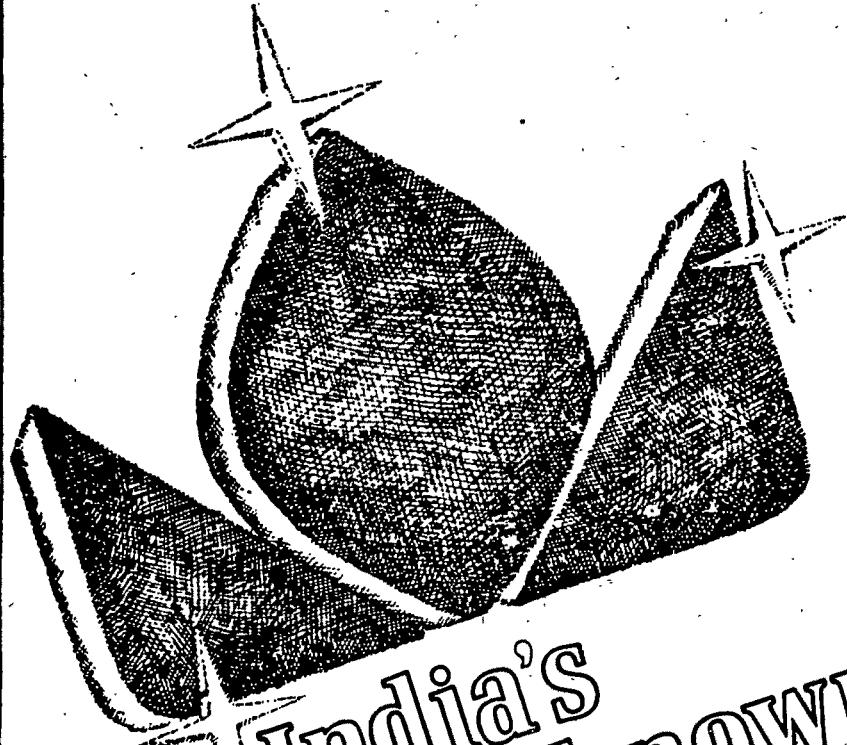
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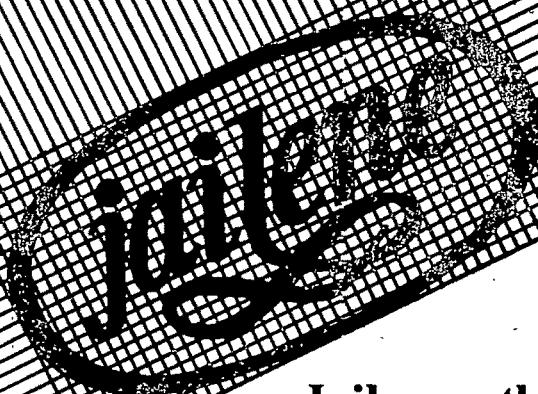
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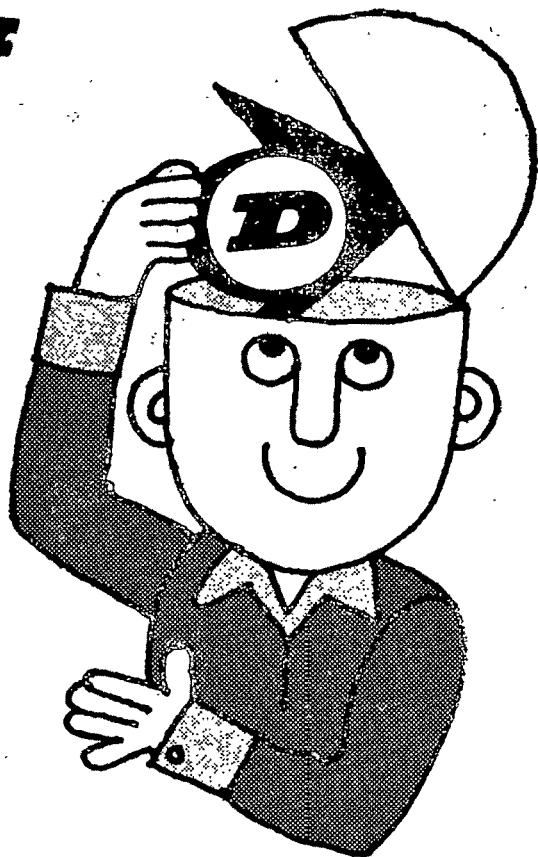
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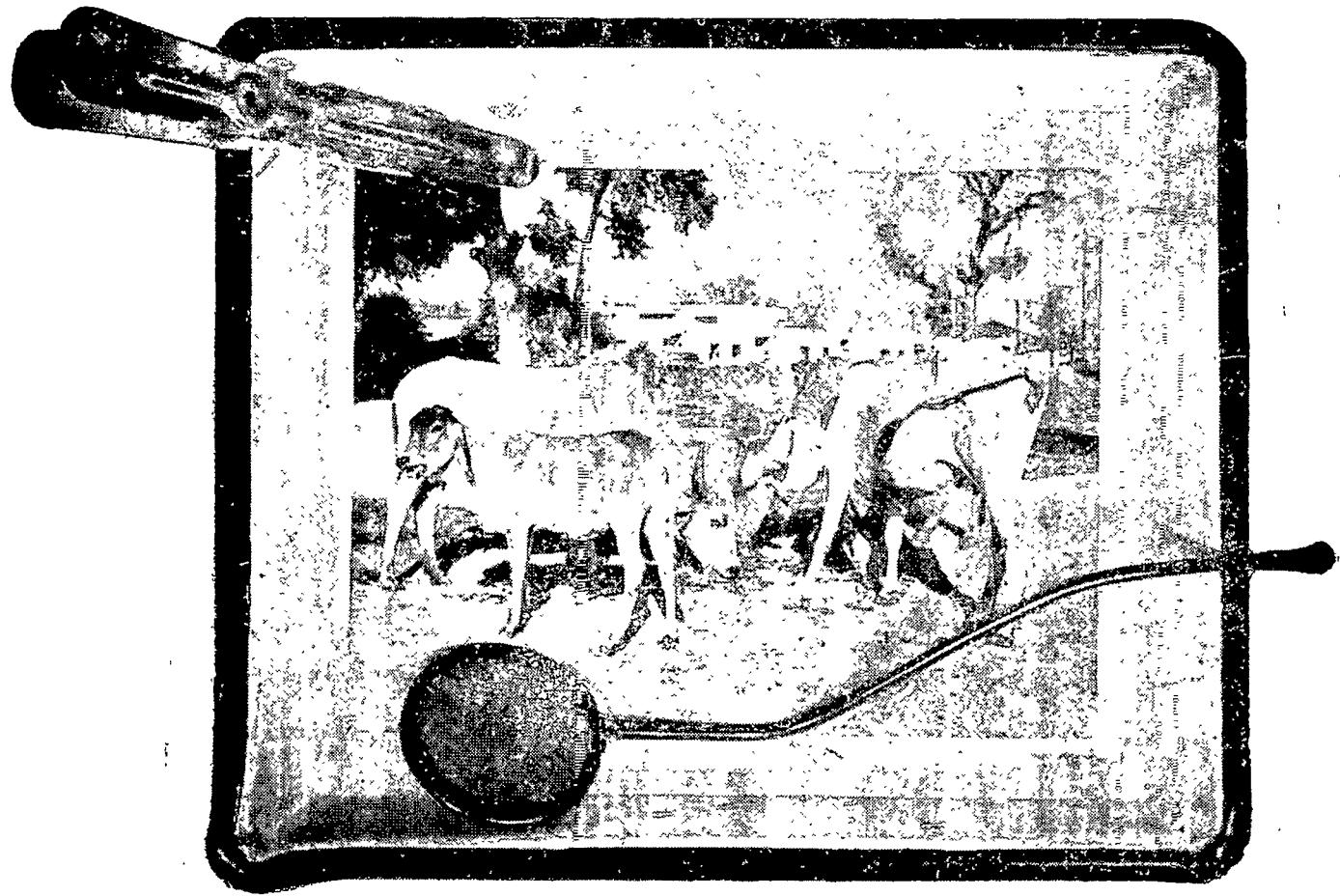
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COVER
Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

These are some papers prepared for the seminar on
Centre-State relations held at Bangalore, August 5-7,
1983.

The problem

THE debate on this subject reflects the changed condition of the federal polity. All-round development has nurtured regional elites which are not prepared to knuckle under to the diktats or motivations of those who have exercised continental power. Very often, these new interests feel insecure within the over-centralised frameworks of the old order. The impulses of the past, which emphasised the need for determined centralised direction, are being widely questioned in the changed condition of India, no longer backward and uncertain. The truth of the matter is that, contrary to our claims, we have created a capitalist society, and its segments in the States are not prepared to accept subservience to continental business interests.

The controversy over Centre-State relations has surfaced rather sharply because the leadership of national political formations failed to see the transformations in class relations involved in our development model. The new assertions, coming largely through governments strongly rooted in the regions, create questionings about national coherence, but these fears are baseless so long as we are sensitive to the essentially healthy desire properly to balance federal functioning. In other words, the debate has to find a structural form which is different from the present confrontations and manoeuvrings between the Centre and the States. These postures distort the reality.

No healthy federal functioning is possible unless care is taken to encourage a variety of concepts and disciplines which envisage a plurality of political assertion. This is not to suggest that a single party enjoying power across the sub-continent is necessarily

inimical to a proper balance of powers between the Centre and the States. If it is a functioning party, and sensitive to the need for a lively consensus on policy-making and implementation, there is no reason why it cannot nurture a genuine federal culture. But this possibility invariably recedes with the destruction of institutions, the rise of personality cults and the opportunist play of factions. We have experienced both tendencies.

Significantly, the pressure for a federal reformation is building from a wide spectrum of political commitment. The CPI(M) in West Bengal, the DMK/AIADMK in Tamilnadu, the Telugu Desham in Andhra Pradesh, the Janata/Kranti Ranga in Karnataka, the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir and the Akalis in the Punjab already represent an extraordinary consensus. But they are not alone. They are voicing the anxieties and hopes even of certain elements of the ruling Congress(I) at the Centre and in several States which is committed publicly (not privately) to an unthinking centralism and a dynastic striving which makes no sense to the movements which are beginning to steer our 700 million people over this sprawling sub-continent.

In this connection, it would be idle to pretend that profound anxieties do not exist on the question of decentralisation at a time when both the Centre and the States have twisted the norms of governance to suit their corrupt and partisan practices. In other words, the act of decentralising power and initiative is in the public mind no longer a guarantor of correction and progress. The passion of the elites, seeking a new status in federal life, has to be matched by fresh institutional commitments to democratic

practice, secular attitudes and just economic policies. This is the alternative we are forever seeking, an alternative that never crystallises; the present unsatisfactory *status quo* perpetuates itself.

Systems cannot be built in a vacuum. They invariably reflect the mores of a society. We know this. But we have to ask ourselves whether we have given adequate thought to the structuring of decision-making in our extremely complicated and fractionalised society. Fractions have to be balanced to make equations. The Nehruist thrust towards institutionalisation and probity was such an effort, but even that was abandoned in the last years of his life.

In other words, we have to take serious note of the new level of development this sub-continent is now searching for. The thrust for 'decentralisation' should not become a cover for incapacitating the Centre, blunting its creative role as a moderniser and unifier, but it should be the catalyst for effective policy-making and implementation, competitive effort and a more balanced growth of the potentials of the sub-continent. If a national planning body works at macro-level, regional bodies should specialise in micro studies. If the national banks are seen to be diverting savings from backward to advanced areas, regional banking should be organised as a competitive challenge.

An approach of this kind could yield, for instance, competitive airlines on a zonal basis, local radio and TV operations, varied experiments in educational systems designed to make training of all kinds available to the people and to help make the backward more competitive, and so on. We are

thrashing around in the old ruts. It is time to emerge and seek new ways of sparking the enormous energy and creativity of our people.

There are various ways of going about the reform of our federal polity and the structuring of powers within it. Being an old civilisation of great complexity and pluralism, we seem to prefer a process of slow change, tackling those issues which assume importance and priority. For example, financial powers are at the moment under intense discussion. But we have to ask ourselves whether a regional devolution or decentralisation of financial power can be taken up in fits and starts and in isolation from the larger frameworks of fundamental continental growth and economic coherence. Also, whether a reorganisation within the regions is necessary to receive such resources. Is it possible to fuse the regional and continental thrusts? There is no intractable contradiction. We have to find the institutions, the norms and accountabilities. We cannot be populist politicians serving only the needs of the moment — for, then, we would only be dividing the resources gathered for more equal wasting, as it were.

This is a very obstinate issue. It touches many areas of governance and cannot be pushed aside merely because it compels us to think seriously, and in depth. If district administrations are paralysed or in ruin, what use decentralisation? Or to take another major aspect of Centre-State relations, can we avoid priority attention to the crises inherent in the autonomous functioning of the continental administrative and police services or, for that matter, of those economic, political and judicial systems which

strengthen the federal coherence and format of the Union of India? The neglect of these infrastructures, their blatant misuse, and the deliberate erosion of the mechanisms which once reinforced their autonomies and credibilities is the work of the rulers of this sub-continent over the past 35 years, both in the States and at the Centre. We cannot proceed to federal trust and stability unless this visible damage is attended to and repaired.

What use proclaiming our commitment to a developing decentralisation when the end result is to duplicate and triplicate, at State and district level, the patterns of corruption and illegality which have damaged the credibility of the once all-powerful, guiding Centre. The desperate effort to salvage the prestige of the Centre through a manipulated party owing allegiance to a single leader is now exposed for what it is as dynastic ambitions are projected to spread the sense of permanence. The opposition and revolt in various regions of the sub-continent would assume greater vigour and health if the practices popularised by a discredited Centre were effectively debunked by the projection of a new texturing of responsive governance. We are not yet able to structure reforms which would transform Centre-State relations and also influence the way centralised and decentralised power is exercised.

It is in this context that we must first study the division of power and responsibility as it was originally arranged, assess it critically to draw appropriate lessons, and point to the erosions, distortions and disruptions in the system. The survey cannot confine itself to some current obsession, significant though it be, like financial power. If we are serious about salvaging federal functioning, the survey must range over a wide area from the misuse of the power to impose President's rule, to the battered viability of the administrative and police system, to the shaky supervision of elections, the anarchic functioning of the judiciary, the suspect role of the Planning Commission and other special commissions designed to cater to federal problems. This initial survey is needed if only to stress how certain political practices have seriously damaged what was a fairly sensitive style of federal functioning and that only corrective action at this level can prepare the way to a fuller realisation of what is needed now to restore real health to our polity. May be, we will come to the conclusion that even the role of the President needs some re-defining.

A solid preliminary exercise of this kind would clear our thinking about the steps which must be taken to acknowledge the changes in the status of the many communities and elites which comprise our sub-continent. We will find that there are several provisions in the Constitution which have never been implemented and which could certainly help in restoring a proper balance between the Centre and the States. For example, the provision for a much expanded and very autonomous Election Commission with regional networks (so important now that electronic voting is envisaged at the next general

election), the proposal for the setting up of an Inter-State Council by the President, whenever required, to help solve disputes between States and between one State and the Centre, and the laying down of time-bound procedures to adjust powers between the Centre and the States with the emphasis always on passing residual powers to the States.

Closely connected with both the self-critical survey of the damage done to federal functioning and the exercise on a new structuring of relationships, within Constitutional provisions and in addition to them, are matters like the Rajya Sabha (whether it should be a body where States have equal representation rather than a dumping ground for defeated politicians), the electronic media (whether it is not time to establish their autonomy and to introduce some competition from the States, municipalities and universities), the need for credible systems for appointing governors, judges, chairpersons of federal commissions, and conferring honours. A little thought should convince us that a commitment to healthy federalism is certainly more than something concerned with tax powers and resource allocation. Our concerns must deepen.

The grave insecurities, conscious and unconscious, embedded in the psyche of an overwhelming majority of Indians will make the task of evolving a new texturing of our federalism rather complicated. Decentralisation delayed, and accepted only after political strife and continuing confrontations, does generate fears about dismemberment. The cohesions of an old civilisation are forgotten in the polemics which mark the controversy. A whole people, even those directly involved, have to be educated about the frameworks of modern political life. This is not being done. The centralisers are silent because they have a vested interest in exploiting the insecurities. The decentralisers are oblivious of the deep fears they generate. The debate on Centre-State relations must, therefore, be brought into a meaningful framework as soon as possible. We will then realise that we are not discussing opposite views, but seeking clarity about the texturing of our federal polity in the years ahead.

Politically, there can be no revival in the fortunes of national or continental parties unless this deliberately confused question of Centre-State relations is sorted out at a new level of federal consciousness and functioning. Only then will regional political formations find the essential linkages to national parties. The longer the delay in facing this urgent task, the greater the danger to cohesion, particularly at the hands of simplistic, populist and lumpen extremists gathering in most parties with their gospel of violence, intimidation and blackmail. No democratic and participative system can live under such pressures. These must be defused by a courageous commitment to systems which will be supported by the overwhelming silent majority in this sub-continent of seven hundred millions.

Dispersing the power

H. K. PARANJAPE

WHEN discussing the question of Centre-State relations, the essential point is the approach one takes to the nature of the Union. If one assumes that India is — or at least should be — a completely integrated and unitary State, with its territory divided into States more for convenience of administration than for any basic reason, one would take a certain view. On the other hand, if one assumes that federalism is inherent in the very character of the Indian Union, and that it is not a matter of accident that we have adopted a federal con-

stitution, one would take quite a different view.

Many of us take the latter approach. Federalism as the basis of the Indian Constitution came to be specially emphasised as a result of Muslim separatism. The national movement earlier had not given much thought to the nature of the future Indian polity. But, even before the Nehru Report of 1928, Gandhiji recognised the importance of dividing the country into its linguistic regions for better organising the national movement, revealing an awareness that some kind of federalism was inherent in the Indian situation.

*Extracted from a paper presented at the Seminar on Centre-State Relations in Bangalore, August, 5-7, 1983.

It has been emphasised by a number of students of the Indian

Constitution that unlike in some other federations where the federating units already existed independently and then came together in a federation, the Indian situation was one where a strong and unitary central organisation already existed before Independence and the formulation of the federation was based on taking away powers from this unitary Central government to be conferred on the federating units. But it should not be overlooked that the unitary government existed only under foreign rulers. Before that there were only some short periods when a large part of the territory was brought under an effective common rule. Most of the time, the different regions were politically independent or quasi-independent even though, largely, for people in the sub-continent, India did exist as an entity to which they also owed some allegiance. It is this that has sometimes been popularly known as the 'unity in diversity' of India that really forms the basis of the Indian polity.¹ If this is accepted, it then follows that federalism has to be accepted as an essential part of one's approach to the Indian polity...

In understanding the reasons why the Constitution provided for a predominant Centre, even making it possible for the federal structure to be converted into a unitary one at certain times, one has to remember the background, the circumstances in which the Constituent Assembly was functioning. The Congress had accepted the necessity of a somewhat loose federation with residuary

powers to the units mainly with a view to making it possible to preserve the unity of the country, by persuading the Muslim League not to insist on partition. But once the decision of effecting partition was announced,² there was no reason to continue this earlier approach...

This tendency was further aggravated because of the fear of the country not being able to pull together and Balkanisation taking place. The danger was very much there, and it was specially brought home by the continuing conflicts in Kashmir and regarding Hyderabad. The partition riots and the enormous flow of migrants suggested that the country was bound to face difficult times in the early years of Independence, and only a strong Central government would be able to cope with them.

It has also to be remembered that the Congress was until then an organisation mainly devoted to carrying on struggles for independence. One of the results of this was that it was a highly centralised organisation, with a few top leaders laying down the law, and most of the others obeying it... It was therefore inevitable that the new Constitution would largely be formed according to what the Central Government thought would be appropriate.

A study of the working of the Constituent Assembly clearly shows that the maximum influence in shaping the Constitution in its main structure was exercised by the Central leaders who were in the government. It should also be noted that, unlike Gandhi, leaders like Nehru and Patel were not much wedded to ideas of decentralisation. Nehru, increasingly conscious of the necessity to undertake big plans for economic development, thought that planned development and speedy growth would require a great deal of Central control. Patel, very much conscious of the law and order situation and the building up of a strong system of administration, wanted to make sure that regional politics did not create difficulties in conducting these tasks. The Communist attempts at uprisings in some

parts of the country such as Telengana reinforced this point...

A major political factor that further helped them was that the only opposition to such a tendency could have come from strong leaders whose political base was in the different federating units. As it happened, at the particular stage of Constitution making, there were few such leaders. For example, both West Bengal and Assam were just coming out from the trauma of partition and were looking to the Centre for large scale assistance to meet the continuing and difficult problem of refugees. The Punjab was still unsettled. Orissa was politically not very powerful. As regards the peninsular part of the country, the nationalities there were so divided among different administrative units that their own genuine regional leaderships were not very visible then.

The only well organised and entrenched regional political leadership was that in U.P. and Bihar: but their topmost leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru or Rajendra Prasad, were wielding power at the Centre. Thus, it was left largely to second rank leaders like K. Santhanam or independent members like H.N. Kunzru to point out the flaws and dangers in over-centralisation. But their voice was not very effective...

One wonders whether things would have been different if, instead of the Constituent Assembly being indirectly elected from those who were themselves elected under a restricted franchise, fresh elections had been held on the basis of adult franchise for the Constituent Assembly as such. It should be noted that the Congress had clearly stated in 1934 that India's future Constitution should be drawn up by a Constituent Assembly 'elected on the basis of adult franchise or as near it as possible.' But, not only was no effort made to do so even after partition when the major hurdle in national decision-making had been overcome, but there was not even an attempt at providing for a ratification of the draft Constitution by the adult population of the country.

It may be said that such an attempt was unlikely to have made

1. See — 'Few would advocate the adoption of the unitary principle for the constitution of an Indian government. Almost every factor that is found to create a sense of separateness is to be found definitely within the vast territories of this country. The economic and geographic regions are many and distinct; and there are marked differences of race, language and religion. In spite, however, of these differences, the vast bulk of at least the non-Muslim peoples have such a feeling of commonness of tradition and civilization and so realise the advantages and political and economic unity that they are strongly in favour of the formation of Indian union'. D.R. Gadgil, *Writings & Speeches on Economic & Political Problems*, Pune, 1981, pp. 423-24.

2. This happened on June 3, 1947.

any real difference. The 1951 elections gave the Congress such success as to suggest that it would have had an overwhelming majority even if special elections had been held to the Constituent Assembly. At the same time, it should be noted that political trends which were almost unrepresented in the Constituent Assembly such as the Communists and other leftists found a prominent place in the Parliament after the first general elections. It should also not be overlooked that, on one of the critical issues affecting the structure of the future government, namely, the nature of the constituent units, popular passions were already getting aroused. Linguistic provinces became an explosive issue within a short time of the first general elections, and the top leaders who had attempted to throttle this demand found that they had to give way before a democratic upsurge. It is not impossible that the demand for a restructuring of the constituent units might have formed a major place in the elections to the Constituent Assembly if they had been held, and that might have given quite a different turn to the whole perspective regarding Centre-State relations.

But that did not happen. We therefore have a Constitution today which has not only many provisions which make the States over-dependent on the Centre in matters like financial resources but, what is much more troublesome, make it possible for the Central authorities to reduce to a large extent — almost destroy — the possibility of autonomous functioning by States even in the areas which are supposed to be their sphere under the Constitution.

The question of choosing Governors went through a number of stages in the Constituent Assembly. Initially, the idea was that the Governor should be directly elected by the people of the State. In order to avoid 'for the President', the 'embarrassing duty of nominating even an officiating Governor' as G.B. Pant put it, even a post of Deputy Governor was suggested. The approach was that giving the federal government any authority to nominate the Governor would be repugnant to the autonomy of the States.

But, then, because of the fear that there might be a conflict and even a deadlock between a popularly elected Governor and the Chief Minister representing the majority party in the legislature, other methods of choosing the Governor such as an indirect election by an electoral college consisting of members of the State legislatures, Members of Parliament from the State, or the election of a panel of names from among whom the President should make the choice, were put forward. Even the last suggestion was opposed by many on the ground that the choice being left to the President would mean that those in power at the Centre would make the choice and that, therefore, if the majority parties at the Centre and in the concerned States were different, a person belonging to the ruling party might be chosen from the panel. It was Jaiprakash Narayan, in one of the rare contributions he made to Constitution-making, who pointed out that, in order to preserve State autonomy, the choice of Governors should have nothing to do with the President.

It is a pity that, at the final stage, all these ideas were abandoned and the proposal for nomination by the President was accepted. Nehru thought that a process of election for Governors would encourage a 'narrow, provincial way of functioning and thinking in each State. It would be better if the Governor was not intimately connected with local parties but was a detached figure, acceptable to the State Government no doubt, but not known to be a part of the party machine.' A hope was expressed that a convention of the State Government being consulted before a Governor was appointed would be built up. Thus the decision was made that the Governor was to be appointed by the President with a tenure of five years, or 'during the pleasure of the President.'

Whatever the intentions or professed pious wishes of the Constitution-makers, the effect of this provision is there for all to see. Except for an occasional Zakir Hussain or Pavate, governorships have usually been conferred either on retired civil

servants or — and this category constitutes very much the majority — on ruling party politicians who, for one reason or another, permanently or temporarily, were to be put out of the way or given a pre-retirement bonus...

The uncertainty of tenure clearly indicated by the phrase 'during the pleasure of the President' and the lure of the salary, perquisites and other advantages of the position were sufficient incentives for most persons appointed to these posts to toe the line of those who governed at the Centre. The possibility, also open under the Constitutional provisions, that the same person could be appointed for a second term either in the same State or in some other State provided a further incentive. No wonder therefore that the Governors have usually been quite happy to act as the instrument of the Central rulers in the States over whose administrations they preside.

As mentioned earlier, hopes had been expressed in the Constituent Assembly that a convention would develop that the State Government would be consulted before a person was appointed as Governor in that State. Apparently, such consultation is done. But this does not necessarily mean that a person unwanted by the State Government is not imposed. Governors are also transferred from State to State, sometimes to ensure that a person who will be better fitted to do the needful on behalf of the ruling party is placed as Governor in a critical State at a critical time; sometimes it appears to be done more to make the Governors realise that in effect they are nothing but temporary civil servants holding positions at the pleasure of those who rule in New Delhi....

The constitutional provisions about the Governor, combined with the emergency provisions under Article 356, have proved to be an infernal machine to subvert the spirit of Centre-State relations in the Union. About this latter provision also, there was much debate in the Constituent Assembly and misgivings had been expressed even then that the Article could become an instrument of establishing Central dictatorship over States. The

tise of the phrase 'or otherwise' in the first part of the Article ('If the President, on receipt of a Report from the Governor of a State, or otherwise') had been specially pointed out as a potential source of much mischief. On the other hand, Ambedkar had expressed the hope that the Article would prove to be a dead-letter.

As our experience shows, the Article has been misused almost from the beginning of the Constitution to subserve the interests of the party ruling at the Centre. From the time when Presidential rule was imposed in the erstwhile PEPSU in 1953 even though the United Front led by the Akali Dal had a majority in the Assembly and even though the Raj Pramukh was reported to have thought that Presidential rule was not necessary, there have been so many cases of the use of this Article for partisan ends that it is not necessary to recount them. The most famous (or infamous) ones are: the dismissal of the CPI(M) Government in Kerala in 1959 even though it continued to have majority support in the Assembly, on the ground that the Government, in the opinion of the Governor, had lost the support of the majority of the people; or the dissolution of the Kerala Assembly in 1965 after the mid-term elections there before the Assembly had met even once, on the ground that the Governor felt that in his opinion no party was in a position to form a Government — even if the 29 newly elected CPI(M) MLAs who were in detention were released; or the dismissal in 1971 of the West Bengal Assembly when the Congress led front disintegrated, without giving an opportunity to the CPI(M), the largest single party, to try to form a government.³ The wholesale dismissals of a number of State Assemblies in 1977, and in 1980, are further proof that such misuse of powers need not be taken to be the mono-

poly of any particular ruling party at the Centre.

There are a number of critical occasions when the Governor has to use his discretion; and the expectation is that he would use it with a sense of fairness so as to inspire confidence among all and create an atmosphere favourable for strengthening democracy. The question whether the defeated Chief Minister should be permitted to continue as a caretaker government when he advises the dissolution of the Assembly, or whether Presidential rule should be imposed till such time as elections can be held, is one such occasion. If there was no provision for Presidential rule, it would have been incumbent on the Governor to permit the defeated Chief Minister to continue as caretaker and to insist on speedy elections. The very availability of this provision has meant that, instead of taking this democratic way out, Presidential rule has many times been imposed and elections have been postponed to suit the convenience of the Central authorities and the Central ruling party.

Aworse aspect of the partisanship shown by the Governors is in their readiness almost to act as sponsors of a party or its allies at the cost of others. Thus, it is well-known that in 1952, Sri Prakash, then Governor of Madras, refused to invite T. Prakasham who had been elected leader by all the opposition parties to form a government, but nominated C. Rajagopalachari as a Member of the Legislative Council and then invited him, as leader of the Congress party, to form the Government. Even a worse example was provided in Bihar in 1967 when the specially appointed Governor, N. Kanungo, appointed S. P. Singh as Chief Minister just for a day so that, on his advice, B.P. Mandal could be nominated a Member of the Legislative Council; and then, as agreed before-hand, S.P. Singh resigned and B.P. Mandal was installed as Chief Minister.

Enough has been written about the over-centralising provisions in the Constitution.... The Central authority and political and administrative powers have many times, and

especially more so in recent years, been so used as to make the State governments feel unstable; and this is so not only about the opposition party governments but even about governments belonging to the ruling party itself. The attempt to create a situation of political supremacy for the Central leadership has resulted in such weakening of State leaders and governments that they can hardly carry out their proper tasks with any stability and confidence.

Enough has also been written about the inelastic financial resources left with the States in the distribution of financial resources so that they have increasingly been forced to depend upon Central financial support to meet their legitimate requirements for developmental and non-developmental expenditure. It is undoubtedly true that the State governments have also not usually tapped the resources at their disposal as they should have. The most notable instances of these are: taxes on agricultural incomes, and also charges for irrigation water and power supply, as well as betterment levies etc. But surely it cannot be overlooked in this context that this has been so in spite of the fact that most State governments have been under the control of the Congress Party through most of these 30 years; and it is the Congress Party which has been in charge of the Central Government as well as the Planning Commission and has endorsed suggestions for the proper tapping of these sources right from 1950.

A major political constraint on State governments tapping these resources has been that their imposition would adversely affect a very large number of people and thus affect the popularity of those who impose these levies adversely. Perhaps, one can say that the whole process of centralisation in decision-making and planning has resulted in the States not feeling that it is they who have to bear the real burden of developing their people. They have become accustomed to being dependent on the Centre in important matters relating to development plans and programmes.

An important instrument which completely upset the balance in

3. For a detailed and systematic study of these phenomena, see: B.D. Dua — *Presidential Rule in India (1950-74)*, New Delhi.

For the odd example of a conscientious Governor who tried to be fair and was therefore unpopular with the Central ruling party, see: D.C. Pavate: *My Days as Governor, 1974*, esp. pp. 181-208.

Centre-State relations towards Central dominance was the manner in which the system of development planning evolved and functioned.⁴ M.R. Masani has recently indicated that when the question of introducing the new item of development planning in one of the three lists of subjects came up, Nehru was thinking of putting it in the Union List. As it is, it has been included in the Concurrent List. This is as it should be. But what has happened actually is that the whole planning set-up in the country has evolved in a manner where the Central Government dominates the formulation of development plans even in areas which are very much a part of the State subjects.

A number of measures have contributed to this. The fact that the Planning Commission was set up merely by a resolution of the Central Government and continues on that basis has meant that it is a body fully subordinate to the Central authorities. To some extent, the fact that the Prime Minister is its Chairman and some more Central Ministers — especially the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Planning — are its members has given it a certain special status... In that sense, it really plays the function of a coordinating ministry for the developmental activities of the Centre.

The Commission is not a federal body and has no representatives of the States on it. In fact, the States have no real influence with the Commission. The National Development Council provides the most important link between the Commission and the States. But its role is too casual, spasmodic and almost perfunctory to ensure that the State's participation in the planning process is either continuous or deep. There have been attempts from time to time to create Standing Committees of the NDC, or official-level Standing Committees, which will ensure the participation of States in the work of the Planning Commission in its various aspects, but these efforts have hardly ever succeeded, or lasted for very long. Plan formulation which is the main task

around which the Planning Commission's functioning revolves is largely undertaken by the Commission on its own, with the participation of the Central Ministries to some extent but with little effective participation by the States except for their own development plans.

Partly because of the goodwill as well as the respect which most State governments had for the Planning Commission especially with the Prime Minister heading it, and partly because Central assistance played an important role in financing States' Plan outlays, the States were steam-rollered for quite a long time into accepting Central dictates.... The existence of full-fledged ministries in Delhi dealing with subjects which were essentially the responsibility of the States could not but result in the Central ministries wanting to develop their empires and assuming that the States should accept their leadership in various matters of development plans, policies and programmes. Financial inducements were tied to such advice, and the States had therefore little alternative but to accept it.

The result of this approach was that even in matters where the States should have been encouraged to show considerable initiative, and diversity of resources and situations should have compelled a great deal of experimentation in approaches to development, there was too much straight jacketing, and this did not help growth in the best possible manner. The undesirability of such an approach to development planning had been emphasised by various observers, and occasionally also by State leaders. But it was only as part of the overall attempt to redefine Centre-State relations in the period between 1966 and 1970 that this aspect also received special attention. The Administrative Reforms Commission played a useful role in suggesting an approach under which the States would be permitted to enjoy greater autonomy in formulating their own development plans. The fact that D.R. Gadgil was the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission at that time also helped because Gadgil was one of those who had for long criticised the excessive centralisation

of development planning especially in agriculture, social services and such other subjects. The result of this was that the approach to Central plan assistance underwent a significant change.

As the 4th Plan document pointed out: 'Hitherto the Plan schemes under different heads of development had their own patterns of assistance and the States could draw their grants or loans accordingly. Outlays under certain heads of development as also some of the specified schemes were earmarked and could not be diverted to other heads of development or schemes. This involved procedure of estimation, intimation and payment of Central assistance led to a complicated system of accounting and delays in final financial adjustments. Another feature of this system was that comparatively more advanced States were able to obtain a larger proportion of Central assistance in the form of grant even though the total quantum of assistance from the Centre was less in comparison with the less advanced States as they could adopt, in view of their revenue position being comfortable, such schemes as would attract large amounts of grant.'

'In order to simplify the procedure for release of Central assistance, to avoid adoption of standard schemes unsuited to local conditions and needs as well as to ensure equity among States in regard to the grant assistance for the Plan, it has been decided that in future there will be no schematic patterns of assistance. Central assistance will not be related to any specific scheme or programme under the State Plans but will be given to the States through block grants and block loans. Each State will get a fixed proportion (30%) of Central assistance in the form of grant and the balance (70%) by way of loans. In order to ensure that the overall priorities of the Plan are adhered to, outlays under certain heads or subheads of developments and specified schemes will, however, be earmarked and will not be diverted to other heads of development'. And again: 'States will now have much greater initiative in the formulation of schemes and programmes. Till now the

State Plans had been formulated by and large in terms of standard schemes which had been approved by the Central ministries and the Planning Commission and which carried with them a quantum of assistance in the shape of loans and grants.⁵

Another aspect of the same approach was that Centrally sponsored schemes in which a uniform pattern of staffing and administrative organisation were laid down by the Centre, and which the States thought were in many cases unsuited to their genuine requirements, were drastically cut down. It has since been decided that they would be confined to demonstrations and pilot projects, surveys and research, or would have regional or inter-State character, or would be such that they have a definite overall significance from the all-India angle.

Of course, this has not meant a significant reduction in the Central expenditure on subjects the bulk of whose real work is carried on in the States. But it has resulted in a curtailment of the attempts at imposition of Central ideas on State governments in relation to development programmes, at least in a number of fields.

The systematisation of the basis of Central assistance carried out at the time of formulating the 4th Five-Year Plan — sometimes called the Gadgil formula — has not only reduced Central interference and arbitrariness in providing Plan assistance to some extent, but it has also helped in providing specific attention to the grant of special assistance to particularly backward or vulnerable States. Because it is difficult to obtain unanimity on any full scale alternative, the Gadgil formula continues to provide the basis of assistance though it was slightly modified in 1980.

All recommendations for improving planning at the State level have largely fallen on deaf ears. In most States, planning continues to be

spasmodic and there is great reluctance on the part especially of the political elements in charge of State administrations to permit systematic and coordinated development effort being pursued under the auspices of an expert planning body. This is because such planning cannot always accommodate the short term politically expedient demands of such leadership...

At the Centre, politics did not create much of a problem so long as there was reasonable political stability and also a great deal of consensus about the lines on which development efforts were to be pursued. It is in the post-Nehru era, with political instability and conflict between parties and factions within parties — seemingly ideological but in reality largely based on the pursuit of political power by rival groups — that the mix-up of political and expert elements has led to increasing ineffectiveness of the Planning Commission. The discontinuity in the planning process resulting from political changes led to an interruption of the planning process for three years (1966 to 1968), and to a wholesale change in the composition of the Commission in 1967, 1970, 1977 and 1980. It also resulted in the undue premature termination of the Fifth Plan, virtual interruption of planning, the setting aside of the work done by the Lakdawala Commission, and the preparation of a new Sixth Five-year Plan. Such partisan approaches can hardly help the successful use of development planning as a major instrument of national transformation.

It appears to be clear that the Planning Commission falls between two stools. With the Prime Minister as Chairman, the Finance Minister and sometimes some other ministers as members, and the increasing tendency to have a Deputy Chairman from among senior party politicians — and this person being changed every year or so for no reason that one can fathom — the Commission very much becomes a wing of the party government ruling at the Centre. But, as it has on it some non-official experts, professionals or even civil servants as members, it does

not have the authority of a sub-committee of the Cabinet. It is thus neither an expert body, nor a body with political authority....

In fact, the over-politicisation of public life in the country, with increasing non-cooperation and conflict among major political parties and factions within parties has created a situation where, if an attempt at development planning is to be made and seriously pursued, the planning organisation should be depoliticised as much as possible. This involves that the Planning Commission should cease to be a body composed partly of ministers and partly of experts. It should also no longer be a body which is fully subordinate to the Central Government and holding office at its pleasure.

It also needs to be noted that it is not unusual for the Union Government, with its coordinating powers and its capacity to make special grants to States facing difficulties, to discriminate among them on political grounds. For example, it is well-known that in 1974, when the Central authorities were not happy with the Chief Minister there, Chimanbhai Patel, even though he belonged to the same party, the flow of foodgrains to Gujarat suddenly declined. This led to much disaffection and rioting, which left a large number of dead and injured in the State. The Chief Minister then resigned; and the flow of foodgrains quickly increased. That special accommodation grants are given to State governments is a known fact. They have to face sudden emergencies arising out of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and famines. Therefore, the attitude of all the Central authorities, as if these grants were a great favour, is questionable because the States' finances are not only comparatively inelastic but, once the five-year plan is finalised, almost fully committed, making it difficult for them to meet such large contingencies without serious inroads in developmental outlays and without resorting either to more deficit financing or seeking additional Central assistance...

An important reason for the Union Government being given

somewhat overriding powers under the Constitution, especially in economic matters, was at one stage explained by Nehru as the necessity to carry out integrated development of whole regions and of the country. When he supported the proposal to make education, health and forests Concurrent subjects—instead of State ones as under the 1935 Act—provincial government chiefs like G.B. Pant and B.G. Kher objected. Nehru then asked: how will it be possible for an integrated plan for forest development to be carried out unless the subject was included in the Concurrent list? The answer given by G.B. Pant needs to be noted when thinking of this whole question. It was not legislative coercion that would help in such matters, he pointed out, but persuasion and willing consent. It is this that most protagonists of a dominant Centre have overlooked...

A special feature of the Indian federal system is the existence of all-India services, especially the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service, members of which occupy important positions both in the Union and the State governments, but which are essentially under the control of the Union government. This unique feature of Indian federalism is obviously a heritage of the pre-Independence services—the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police. The records of the Constituent Assembly show quite clearly that the merits of this proposal were never fully discussed. Sardar Patel pushed the proposal through, partly because of its importance in his view of the future, and there were few members who could oppose him, and partly because an assurance had been given to the former all-India services about their conditions of service etc.

The main argument put forward in support of the maintenance of these services in the existing manner is that not only does this help to attract the best talent to important administrative jobs but also that the constitution of the services enables their members to enjoy a degree of independence which enables them to act with integrity. The assumption behind the latter argument is obvi-

ously that those holding positions of political power at the Centre are likely to act with greater circumspection and show more respect for the independence and integrity of the civil service than those in the States. There is no evidence to support any such conclusion about a qualitative difference...

Another argument is that the members of the all-India services are likely to be less involved in what are called narrow regional or local interests; and that therefore they are likely to conduct themselves with objectivity and impartiality... If this is a proper approach to administration, what was wrong with having British civil servants administering the country? The approach of the former steel-frame of the ICS, that they should maintain a distance between themselves and the common people so that the latter would look upon them as some kind of guardian-rulers, is surely not an appropriate one for the functioning of a democratic polity.

The main objection to the continuance of these services is that their members cannot but feel more loyal to the Union authorities than to those in the States where they are working. This is likely not only because it is the Union Government which has a final say in determining their career prospects, but also because, with the very uneven distribution of financial and other resources between the Union and the States, the former has an undue share of high level posts under its control and patronage. Also, the possibility of being deputed to high-emolument positions in international organisations depends very much on the Union authorities. The State authorities many times therefore find that the officers from these services are more loyal to the Union; and this can be quite troublesome when the parties in power are different and are sometimes in conflict.

A similarly fallacious approach results in other peculiar proposals. A recent one, supported even by the highest judicial authority in the country, is that a number of High Court Judges in every State should be drawn from outside the State, and it is even proposed that the Chief

Justice might also be so drawn. Unless the idea is that the interpretation of laws has nothing to do with the traditions of the particular people, in a country with so much linguistic and cultural diversity, to think of any such proposal is in effect to think of justice as having little to do with the common people in a community. As legislatures in various States begin to function more and more in their own regional languages as they must, and the law courts at different levels begin to interpret laws and administer justice in the local languages, how can one conceive of the High Courts working with judges who are drawn from a different language group and therefore can neither understand the language of the State laws and the judgements of the lower courts, nor are conversant with the language, literature and cultural heritage of the regions in which they are functioning.

In fact, it should be considered a matter of utter shame for us that in a democracy, 30 years after Independence, all our important work—in government, administration, legislatures, science, technology, industry, business or law courts—is conducted in a language which not more than a very small percentage of our population can understand. This is nothing but elitism continuing under the garb of democracy. How can the common citizen effectively come into his own when almost all important aspects of life are dominated at the highest level only by those who understand English?

One might also say that it is this elite which prefers that the affairs of the country are not only conducted in a language which the common people cannot understand but that they are also run by the small coterie which has taken upon itself the mantle of the former foreign rulers of the country.

Against the use of local languages for all important purposes, it is said that efficiency will suffer. Scientific and technological progress will be retarded because there would be inadequate association with the best knowledge available in the world. There are even lawyers who allege that judicial functioning will become

impossible unless the higher courts function for a long time in English. All such arguments overlook the fact that in the world there are many language groups which have much smaller numbers of people speaking those languages, but conduct all their affairs in their own language; and there is nothing to show that they are handicapped as a result. One has only to mention countries like Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia and many other European countries not to speak of Japan...

Another objection to the full scale use of various regional languages for all purposes in their respective areas is that this would in effect lead to a break-up of the country and make mobility difficult. Firstly, it is necessary to understand that each of our language areas is practically larger than most other countries of the world. Also that the bulk of our people are bound to spend most of their working life within their own language area. Our affairs should therefore be conducted in such a way as to facilitate the full use of the potential talents of the vast bulk of our people, not for the benefit of the small minority which will migrate from one area to another and which will be interested in operating at the all-India level. There is nothing to prevent those who want to operate in various parts of the country to either learn the language in the area in which they are going to operate or to use the commonly understood languages like Hindi/Hindustani/English.

In this context, the best example for India is that of Yugoslavia. It is also a country in which no one language or language group is pre-eminent and therefore all languages have to be treated as equal. All the languages of the different republics of the Yugoslav federation enjoy equal status. In each republic, all affairs are conducted in the local language...

It also needs to be noted that the Yugoslavs also found that, even though they had recognised at the very beginning of their post Second War existence that they were 'a plurinational community', 'the Federation had for a very long time kept

broad, weighty functions, particularly economic and legislative ones' which 'complicated the relations between the Federation and the Socialist Republics' and 'aggravated interrepublican relations.' The Constitutional Amendments which they adopted in 1971 were meant to realise 'the independence and statehood of the Republics...', to determine (not only) their stronger responsibility for their own economic and social upswing, but also for the functioning of the Federation.⁶

been brought to accept a modification away from the earlier secessionist one to one only insisting on genuine self-government. But the situation in Punjab appears to be going out of hand and this is the inevitable outcome of the failure of those in power at New Delhi to understand the importance of permitting genuine self-government to various sub-nationalities in India. Even when various other linguistic sub-nationalities were permitted to constitute their own separate States, there was an attempt for long to deny this right to the Punjabi speaking people. There has also been persistent effort to manipulate local politics in such a way as to deny the natural leadership in every State to come up and exercise responsibility. This cannot but lead to the growth of regional parties and, later, to regional chauvinism. Unless the Central leadership understands the essentially federal character of the Indian polity, such developments are inevitable.

Some consider that the regional leaderships may be conservative, and may tend to oppress handicapped sections like minorities, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and also agricultural and other labour. This is not unlikely. But there is not the slightest proof that in the last 30 years Central dominance has been able to make any significant difference to the position of these sections... Except make-believe acts and a radical facade, New Delhi's rule has mainly helped the elite and the haves all through these thirty-five years. It is more likely that radical groups representing the poor and the oppressed may succeed in some State or the other, as has already happened occasionally; and a dominant Centre under the present Centre-State dispensation has the will and also the power to dethrone them, or at least thwart their pro-poor efforts. The poor and the oppressed should not therefore expect to obtain any relief from a strong Centre...

The implications of the present situation and our analysis of it are clear. The whole question of the federal structure in India and the relations in it between the Union

6. Pavle Nikolic: *The Socio-political System of Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 1974.

and the federating units needs to be looked at afresh... At this stage, it is unnecessary to go into the details of the changes that are necessary. It may be enough to indicate the broad nature of the changes that would be involved. For one thing, the powers which the Centre has of interfering with the States in the areas under their normal governance need to be removed. This would imply that the institution of Centrally nominated Governors, who operate as instruments of the Central authorities, has to go. So also Article 356.

At the same time, the question of restructuring the set-up of the federating units may also have to be considered. While the necessity to recognise the linguistic sub-nationalities and to grant them the right to run their own States has now been largely realised in practice, the question whether, for enabling the common people effectively to participate in their own governance and, what is even more important at the present time, their own economic development, it is not necessary to have much smaller States than many of the present ones needs to be carefully examined. One of the urges very much recognised in the Yugoslav philosophy of self-management is the release of local energies;⁷ and this would probably be achieved far better with smaller, more manageable, units of government. Whether this merely involves better and more Panchayati Raj, or it would require a larger number of smaller States is a matter which needs attention. The continuous complaints of neglect from the Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra would suggest that not only Delhi, but even Bombay — and on that analogy, Lucknow or Patna or Madras—are very far for certain regions to receive their full share of attention.

Moreover, if the representation of States in the Rajya Sabha is changed — as many students think it should be to accord with the federal principle — so that all States have equal or almost equal representation there, there would be a definite in-

centive to form more equal — and more manageable—federating units.

It is also vital to redefine the relationship in the economic sphere. The Central control over practically all industries has to give way to a distribution of industries and aspects of their working between the Union and the States which would serve the functional purposes of appropriate growth and regulation in public interest... The Planning Commission should be converted into a statutory organisation with a whole time membership, fixed tenure and continuity through the staggered retirement of its members. It should be entrusted with specific functions and should be seen to be acting on its own, though of course in continuous collaboration with the governments both at the Union level and in the States. Such a body is likely to command more respect from not only State governments but also various sectoral interests, and therefore be more effective. The National Development Council will have also to become a statutory body, with appropriate links established between the State planning organisations and the federal Planning Commission.

Finally, there is also the necessity of having some organisation which will provide a forum for consultation on vital and important matters.

At present there is no body which provides a forum for important decisions to be taken by some kind of national consensus. The Privy Council in great Britain is the kind of body which may be thought of in this context. It provides a venue where the leaders of the country, past and present, from the ruling party and the main opposition, and others very much involved in the present and future of the country, come together and try to arrive at decisions of vital importance to the country. In India, such matters can include the nominations for the posts like the Chief Justice of India, the Chief Election Commissioner, and perhaps even the President, the Vice-President and the Governors. Questions like the declaration of Emergency when necessary, or other steps to be taken to prevent a break-down of law and order in some part of the country or, what

would be even more important, questions of war and peace may also be discussed in such a body in confidence.

It should be recalled that there was a proposal put forward at one stage before the Constituent Assembly for a 'Council of States'. Its functions were similar to those mentioned earlier, and the composition suggested was: the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister if any, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, presiding officers of the two Houses of Parliament, the Attorney General, former Presidents, Prime Ministers and Chief Justices; and seven nominees of the President. But the idea was not pursued...

Of course, for such an institution to be created and properly utilised, the main political parties, and especially the ruling party, will have to openly accept the bona fides of other political parties. There has been a regrettable degree of self-righteousness in the Congress Party and, to some extent, among all parties. A democratic polity cannot operate unless there is some minimum degree of mutual confidence... In critical circumstances, the President, the Governor, the Chief Justice or the Chief Election Commissioner have to take decisions which can seriously affect the interests and fortunes of one political party or the other. Unless, therefore, the persons appointed to these posts are chosen with the maximum attempt at consensus, there would develop simmering discontent which would make the smooth functioning of the polity difficult. To ensure that the system functions well, the composition of the State Council as perhaps such a body may be called, may have to include, in addition to the functionaries already mentioned earlier, the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha. It will also have to include one Chief Minister each to represent the different regional zones.

Of course, it is true that various forums — formal and informal — have been used from time to time for discussion on major policy issues. There are conferences of Governors, Chief Ministers and Ministers deal-

7. See, P.J.D. Wiles: *Economic Institutions Compared*, Oxford (U.K.), 1977, p. 476.

ing with particular subjects which discuss issues relating to policies, plans and programmes. The National Development Council is a body which represents the Centre as well as the States for discussions relating to development plans and allied problems. But these bodies either deal with particular areas of government or, as in the case of Governors' conferences, provide a forum for exchange of views more than for taking decisions. The Chief Ministers' conferences have certainly a more positive role in that, on crucial matters and critical occasions, they have been used at least as sounding boards before important decisions were announced.

It appears that Lal Bahadur Shastri in his brief period of Prime Ministership attempted to develop a body which a foreign student of Indian affairs designated as 'the Grand Council of the Republic.'⁸ The attempt was of too short duration to help develop a convention or even attain some kind of definite form. What is however important is that there was apparently a deliberate effort to call together for informal discussions on important problems key persons from the Central Government, State governments and also party politicians who did not hold any State office... 'Thus, the Centre and the States, the Party and the Government, and diverse factions, groups and ideological tendencies are all present, making the Grand Council a combined authority-power summit in the Indian polity.' It was apparently felt that, with Nehru's recent departure from the scene, a group consensus had to be deliberately arrived at so as to ensure cohesion.

Of course, at that time, there were no complications such as parties other than the Congress being in power in the States. This happened soon after and, since then, attempts at genuine consultation and consensus have been rare. The situation was too new in the period between 1967-69 for any convention to develop or arrangements to evolve. With the split in the Congress in 1969, and the bitterness

that this generated in the two wings of that party, any attempt at a consensus would have been difficult. It is true that the Bangla Desh crisis was so-handled by everybody concerned, and especially by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, that there appeared to be a great deal of common understanding, mutual support and consensus among major political formations in the country on the handling of that very difficult situation. Unfortunately, there was hardly an attempt made to sustain this atmosphere. As in the ruling Congress Party, so also in the country as a whole, the aim appears to be to ensure monolithic control of the Leader and a coterie around her. It was obvious that opposition parties as well as self-respecting elements within the ruling party itself, and non-party persons, could not accept the role of drummer boys.

The history of increasing mutual suspicion with the Emergency interlude, and various other developments since then are too recent to need any recapitulation. What needs to be stressed however is that there is very little of consultation on important decisions even within the ruling party, not to speak of one between the ruling party and other important political parties and groups as well as non-party elements in the country. Moreover, the effort in 1977 as also in 1980 when there was a full-scale change in the party in power, appears to have been to repudiate whatever was done by the previous government.

How to effect a change in this atmosphere is a much larger theme with which we cannot deal here. It is however suggested that if an institutional arrangement for the regular coming together of the most influential and important elements in the country existed, over a period of time it may help to reduce the barriers of suspicion and distrust, and develop better understanding and may be a consensus on nationally important matters. Article 263 already provides sufficient flexibility to enable such an organisation with a wide enough scope to be set up.

Constitutional and political powers

A. G. NOORANI

FOR quite some time after the coming into force of the Constitution of India, discussion as to whether it was a federal or a quasi-federal Constitution was very much in vogue. The sterility of such a debate should now be apparent. By K.C. Wheare's test, ours is certainly not a federal Constitution. He prescribed that 'The general and regional governments of a country shall be independent each of the other within its sphere.' This, of course, is not true of our Constitution for a variety of reasons.

Parliament can legislate with respect to a matter in the State List in the national interest (Art. 249) or if a Proclamation of Emergency is in force (Art. 250). The provisions for resolving inconsistency between Central and State laws are also weighted in favour of the Centre (Art. 251 and 254).

Indeed, as M.C. Setalvad has pointed out, the anxiety of the founding fathers to provide for the legislative supremacy of the Union in respect of the three Lists that they were creating is shown by the very language in which Article 246

of the Constitution which introduces these Lists, has been framed. (*Union & State Relations under the Indian Constitution*; Eastern Law House, Calcutta, 1974; p. 44).

The Union List embraces 97 entries and includes subjects of importance to the whole country like defence, foreign affairs, banking, currency and coinage, and certain taxes and duties either of country-wide importance or capable of levy and collection by the Union. The State List has 66 entries and broadly includes subjects of local importance like public order, police, education, local government, public health and sanitation, agriculture, forests and fisheries, and certain taxes and fees appropriately leviable in local areas. The Concurrent List contains 47 entries and includes subjects like criminal law and procedure, civil procedure, marriage and divorce contracts, bankruptcy, adulteration of foodstuffs and other goods, economic and social planning, welfare of labour, and acquisition and requisition of property.

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The Concurrent powers of legislation do not include any powers of

taxation. Also, as Setalvad points out, the legislative field of the Union has been extended by several devices in the formulation of the entries in the Lists, some of which are not to be found in the Government of India Act, 1935. First, a number of entries in the State List have been made subject to entries in the Union List (e.g., List II—Entries 13, 17, 22, 23, 24, 32 and 54) or the Concurrent List (e.g., List II—Entries 13, 26, 27 and 57), or any law made by Parliament (e.g., List II—Entries 12, 37 and 50). Secondly, some entries in the Concurrent List have been made subject either to the Union List (e.g., List III—Entries 19 and 32) or to any law made by Parliament (e.g., List III—Entries 31, 33(a) and 40). Thirdly, through several entries in the Union List itself, the State List can be encroached upon by the Union either in the public interest or for reasons of national importance (e.g., List I—Entries 52, 53, 54, 56 [public interest] and Entries 62, 63, 64 and 67 [national importance]).

This, however, is only one side of the picture. For one thing, the concept of a unitary State was rejected by the Union Constitution Committee of the Constituent Assembly as well as by the Union Powers Committee in their Reports dated, respectively, July 4 and 5, 1947. The conclusion was emphatic 'that the soundest framework for our Constitution is a Federation with a strong Centre.' It matters not that their 'strong Centre' does not live up to the federal doctrine. What is more to the point is whether the polity, as it has evolved in the last three decades, lives up to the founding fathers' concept of the Federation. They conceived of a strong Centre which, nonetheless, left 'a fairly wide range of subjects to the Provinces in which they would have the utmost freedom to order things as they liked' as N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar explained in the Union Powers Committee's Report (*Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. V, pp. 3 and 39).

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar foresaw the trends which make the federal authorities stronger. 'This is due to modern conditions. The same conditions are sure to operate on the

Government of India and nothing that one can do will help to prevent it from being strong. On the other hand we must resist the tendency to make it stronger. It cannot chew more than it can digest' (CAD, Vol. VII, p. 42).

The crucial question is whether the Union of India has acquired power which it cannot usefully discharge or powers which properly belong to the States. There is a widespread feeling that it has done both. In a press interview given in January 1978, President N. Sanjiva Reddy complained that 'the federal structure as envisaged in the Constitution has been eroded somewhat.' He remarked that a 'State Chief Minister cannot undertake even the small things, a health scheme or a forest development scheme or something like that. Officials from the Centre think they have to go from here to do even such things.' In the Sixth Govind Ballabh Pant Memorial Lecture, delivered on March 7, 1978, President Sanjiva Reddy urged a considerable devolution of authority from the Centre to the States within the constitutional framework.

Some gross distortions have undoubtedly crept into our constitutional system over the years. The Administrative Reforms Commission's Study Team on Centre-State Relations, headed by M.C. Setalvad, pointed out that 'as a result of planning, the three horizontal layers of administration represented by lists of Central, Concurrent and State subjects have been vertically partitioned into plan and non-plan sectors and that within the plan world, the compulsions and consequences of planning have tended to unite the three horizontal pieces into a single near-monolithic chunk controlled from the Centre although operated in respect of Concurrent and State subjects in the States. It would not be wrong to describe this as a distortion resulting from discipline-enforcing structures in which the demonstrable weaknesses are so numerous as to call for a review of the system.'

The Administrative Reforms Commission's Report on Centre-State relations recognised that 'with

the undertaking of economic and social planning — a subject included in the Concurrent List — the Centre has taken on an active role in the formulation and the overseeing of the execution of plan programmes in fields which also include subjects which fall in the State List. The role of the Central agencies which had, prior to the advent of planning, been to function as observers, co-ordinators and advisers, has expanded greatly and tended to outstrip its legitimate jurisdiction.'

The Report noted that 'the main grievances lie in the financial field' and conceded that 'there is weight in the argument that as the Planning Commission is a body established by the Central Government under an executive order, it would be desirable for another body created by law to be entrusted with the responsibility of formulating the principles governing the allocation of plan grants. Accordingly, we have recommended that the Finance Commission should be entrusted with this responsibility.'

Unfortunately, the Report of the Centre-State Relations Inquiry Committee headed by Dr. P.V. Rajamannar (1971) adopted a doctrinaire approach and made recommendations designed simply to make the Indian Constitution an exact replica of the U.S. Constitution. The Administrative Reforms Commission, on the other hand, opined that 'the Constitution is so well-balanced that while providing maximum possible autonomy to the States, it places in the hands of the Centre adequate powers to ensure the unity and integrity of the country. This balance has been tilted to some extent in favour of the Centre during the course of the last two decades.' It referred to the post-1967 developments and remarked that the 'controversies pertain mostly to matters administrative and financial and not to constitutional issues ...'

'We, therefore, do not think it necessary to suggest any amendments to the Constitution. We have, however, made recommendations to delegate more financial and administrative functions and powers to the States with the twin objectives

of making the relations between the Centre and the States smoother and introducing efficiency and economy in the administrations of the Union and State governments. It is not in the amendment of the Constitution that the solution of the problems of the Centre-State relationship is to be sought, but in the working of the provisions of the Constitution by all concerned in the balanced spirit in which the founding fathers intended them to be worked.'

The Report was submitted on June 19, 1969. The fourteen years that have elapsed since have revealed that many a constitutional provision can be perverted to defeat the clear intent of the Constitution-makers. Some of them can be amended, not, indeed, to alter the constitutional scheme, but to provide some protection against its nullification by abuse of the constitutional provisions and institutions.

Foremost among these are the provisions establishing the office of the Governor, an office of pivotal importance for both the autonomy of the States and the soundness of Centre-State relations. The Governor's integrity and a measure of independence vis-a-vis the Centre are indispensable to the State's autonomy.

On May 4, 1979, the Supreme Court ruled in Dr. Raghukul Tilak's case that 'it is not material that the Governor holds office during the pleasure of the President. It is a constitutional provision for determination of the term of office of the Governor and it does not make the Government of India an employer of the Governor ... this office is not subordinate or subservient to the Government of India. He is not amenable to the direction of the Government of India nor is he accountable to them for the manner in which he carries out his functions and duties. He is an independent constitutional office which is not subject to the control of the Government of India. He is constitutionally the head of the State ...' (Hargovind Pant Vs Dr. Raghukul Tilak (1979) 3 scc. 458)

But, then, experience has amply demonstrated that the Governors

cannot fulfil this role so long as they hold office, as they do now, entirely 'during the pleasure of the President.' Some safeguards are necessary to ensure their independence, whether by constitutional amendment or otherwise. The ARC recommended that 'a person should not be appointed as Governor for more than one term. Such a restriction is necessary in order to safeguard his independence and impartiality against being jeopardised by expectations of patronage.'

The ARC's Study Team, headed by M.C. Setalvad, had gone a step further. 'No person who is appointed Governor should take part in politics after his appointment as such,' not even after retirement. To these may be added K. Subba Rao, a former Chief Justice of India's suggestion that a Governor should be ineligible for any other office under Government after retirement and should be irremovable from office on any ground other than proven misbehaviour or incapacity after inquiry by the Supreme Court.

Likewise, Article 201 of the Constitution and related provisions for the President's assent to Bills passed by State legislatures call for a review in the light of experience. Assent has been delayed for months on end and to Bills which the State legislatures were well within their rights in enacting, albeit on matters in the Concurrent List. Withholding the President's assent arbitrarily results in a virtual denial of the Concurrent powers to the States and drastically affects the distribution of legislative powers between the Union and the States.

The Report of the Governors' Committee (1971) appointed by the President observed 'under the Constitution, just as the State is a unit of the Federation and exercises its executive powers and functions through a Council of Ministers responsible to the legislature, and none else, the Governor, as Head of the State, has his functions laid down in the Constitution itself, and is in no sense an agent of the President. In addition, his oath of office under Article 159 requires him to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law." Even in a

situation where the government of a State is taken over by the President under Article 356, the governor does not by virtue of anything contained in the Constitution become an agent of the President.'

The manner in which the Governor's office has been used by the Centre to instal ministries of its choice in breach of settled conventions (most notably in Haryana in 1982) proves the necessity for checks rather than on mere enunciations or reiterations like those in the Governor's Report. In 1980 another issue arose concerning the scope of the Centre's directives to the States. The then Communications Minister, C.M. Stephen, said on March 7, 1980 that States which did not involve the Central law for preventive detention against hoarders 'can or may be pushed out.'

The pertinent constitutional provisions confer no such power and the history of their drafting fortifies this view. Article 256 enjoins: 'The executive power of every State shall be exercised as to ensure compliance with the laws made by Parliament and any existing laws which apply in that State, and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of such directions to a State as may appear to the Government of India to be necessary for that purpose.'

Article 257 (1) directs 'The executive power of every State shall be so exercised as not to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union, and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of such directions to a State as may appear to the Government of India to be necessary for that purpose.'

Thus, the Union's power of giving directions is aimed at regulating the exercise of the offending State's executive power in two cases. First, if the State fails to 'ensure compliance' with a Central law and, next, if the State so exercises its own executive power as to 'impede or prejudice' the exercise by the Union of its own executive power.

Article 256 is concerned with wilful neglect of enforcement of a

Central law of a mandatory character or else the word 'compliance' would have no meaning. A law like the Preventive Detention Act, for instance, is only an enabling statute which adds to the armoury of the powers of governments, Central and State. Each enjoys a clear discretion as to which statutory power to exercise. What a State cannot do, of course, is to obstruct the Union if it exercises its own executive power under a Central law within that State. Article 257 (1) is designed to remove such an obstruction.

The Constituent Assembly's debates on September 9, 1949 make this amply clear. Dr. Ambedkar said that it was sought to meet a situation 'which makes it impossible for the Provincial Government to be carried on.'

The sanction for securing compliance with a Central directive in such a case is an appropriately drastic one which is precisely why it cannot be used for other and partisan ends. It is Article 365 which paves the way for imposition of the President's rule (Art. 356). The remedy against such abuse is a judicial one. The Supreme Court has opened the door ajar to judicial review. It should be persuaded to open it wider.

Article 356 contemplates action based on the satisfaction of the President 'that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.' What seems to be contemplated is the subjective satisfaction of the President to the effect provided in the Article. Abuse of this provision is commonly accepted. Two concepts need redefinition — the doctrine of subjective satisfaction and the nature of the situation warranting action by the President. The Supreme Court's ruling in State of Rajasthan Vs Union of India (AIR 1977 S.C. 1361) can serve as a good foundation to build on.

Discussion of distribution of powers between the Union has tended to concentrate exclusively either on the constitutional or on the political aspect. It is all to the good that this seminar will consider

them together. Distrust of power is writ large over our detailed Constitution. But Dr. Ambedkar was careful to point out that 'democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic and that our people have yet to learn constitutional morality.' (CAD Vol. VII, p. 38)

Constitutional morality has not improved; it has deteriorated since he spoke thus. The Constitution-makers assumed that the political checks would also work and that a viable party system would emerge and influence public opinion. These assumptions have not been fulfilled. A Constitution provides the bare skeleton of a polity. It is the politics which provide the flesh and blood. If politically the doctrine that the State governments must be 'in tune' with the Central Government is accepted (Mrs. Indira Gandhi on February 3, 1972), the *Constitutional* division of powers becomes somewhat blurred if not irrelevant.

There is another aspect, besides. Indian political parties do not respect the federal principle in their own working. Many hold that they do not respect the democratic norms either, since party elections are such a rarity. But a direct result of lack of respect for the federal principle in the party system is that the parties themselves violate the autonomy of State units. If the parliamentary system is to work properly in a federal set-up, it is imperative that the leadership of the national parties allow the State units much greater autonomy than they have done hitherto. In particular, they must not curb the discretion of the Chief Minister on the composition of his Cabinet.

Constitutional amendments must rest on national consensus if they are to have legitimacy. A drastic overhaul of the Constitution on the lines suggested by the Rajamannar Report will lack the consensus. But experience of abuse will persuade the people to accept amendments designed to check abuse in the future. Such amendments are necessary but they will not be enough. It is imperative, above all, to create a national awareness of the worth of the federal concept and its capacity

for growth in both directions; that is in the direction of State autonomy as well. As Prof. Peter H. Merkl remarked in an excellent paper on 'Paradoxes of Federal Theory and Practice,' which he read at a seminar in Agra in March 1972, practice has rendered theories of federalism obsolete. 'Rather than pitting States' rights against central power, the trend in the U.S., Canada, Australia and Europe has been toward sharing and co-operation in services and planning. While the federal governments without a doubt have increased their power at the expense of the State level, the State governments have also gained new functions and are far from extinction. States and local agencies, in particular, have developed ways of participating in the planning and administration of many of the federal activities which at first glance appear to intervene so drastically in their internal affairs.'

He regards Wheare's definition as a 'static' one. The criterion he propounds is more relevant and creative. It should help us to shape our polity in the light of our needs and our experience: 'The new criterion of whether a system is still federal under the new conditions is whether or not the member States will retain significant means of self-expression. This is admittedly a rather flexible standard which will vary according to what may appear significant to a given member community. A culturally, religiously or linguistically distinct member community may consider cultural and educational autonomy more important than urban welfare and transportation policy. In a highly industrialized and urbanized, homogeneous federation, the members' rights of participation in federal policy-making may be regarded as the crux of their existence. Closeness to the local interests and some autonomy in responding to their particular needs will always be an essential of member statehood which may express itself in innovation and experimentation in greatly varying fields of public policy. A vital sense of creative regional initiative and spontaneity is the very life-blood of federal diversity and should not be unduly restrained by central control.'

Economic regulation and planning

MRINAL DATTA CHAUDHURI

THE purpose of this brief note is to raise a number of important issues in the context of economic regulation and planning in a federal framework. These issues have not received adequate attention in the discussions in the country on decentralisation of power and devolution of authority. But, in my opinion, unless these issues are thoroughly discussed and appropriate procedural and institutional innovations designed, the proponents of greater federalism in India are unlikely to go far in introducing genuine improvements, or even meaningful changes, in the Indian system.

Most observers of the Indian scene would agree that over the last thirty years the government at the Centre has grown steadily in power and authority at the expense of the States. Even a superficial look at the Constitution as it was framed by the Constituent Assembly will convince anyone that the way the system runs today is quite different from the intentions embedded in the Constitution. This brief note is not the place to go into the details of the reasons why this trend developed. A part of the explanation lies in the fact that in the early years of the working of the Constitution the same political party ruled at the Centre as well as in all the States. The party found it convenient not to bring out openly the issues of

inter-regional conflicts and the party leaders always tried to resolve them informally amongst themselves. Thus there inevitably developed the concept of a 'party high command,' as the supreme arbiter of all conflicts. Since the same party ruled everywhere, the processes within the Congress Party and the government system naturally became similar.

It is important to recognize that the elite groups in the country of all different shades of political opinion willingly supported this process. Some believed that in the interests of nation building, no kind of inter-regional conflict should be allowed to come out into the open. The history of the country and the memory of partition only accentuated the fear that the country would fall apart unless there was a strong central authority capable of suppressing inter-regional conflicts.

The other strand of the popular support for these centralising tendencies came from the social democrats, which means practically everybody in India. They believed — (rightly, in my opinion) that economic development and social change required an actively interventionist State system. But unfortunately this was equated with crude statism, which operates as a simple command system. Thus, as the State system

in India scaled the commanding heights of the economy, the power at the apex grew at a corresponding rate.

Apart from these structural reasons, in recent years a powerful contributing factor to the centralising tendency has been the style of functioning of Indira Gandhi. She has a clear preference for discretion as against rules and for small coteries of advisers as against the institutionalised structure of government/party machinery. This has succeeded in destroying most of what remained of the rule-based, impersonal, non-hierarchical system of federal polity designed by the framers of the Constitution.

Luckily for us, there is a growing realisation in the country that the power of the Central Government is not the best guarantee against 'the country falling apart'. In fact, it is becoming apparent that excessive centralisation of political authority in a highly plural society may even weaken the unity of the country by destroying the participatory nature of the democratic polity. Similarly, the State's effectiveness in economic and social matters does not depend on the measure of discretionary powers enjoyed by the bureaucratic command system. In the sphere of economic regulation, the concentration of discretionary powers at the Centre may become counter-productive, by making those powers operate in an informational vacuum, unmindful of the motivations guiding the behaviour of the economic units, either in the private or in the public sector.

Now, if there is to be restructuring of the power-balance between the Centre and the States (and maybe, between the State capitals and the lower level local bodies) it is important to look into the structural features of the political economy of India today. If it were merely a question of strengthening the administrative powers and the political autonomy of the State governments — or, in other words, if it were merely a question of the devolution of power from the Centre to the States — one could, perhaps, have gone a long way by looking closely

at the provisions of the Constitution. A clarification or a redefinition of the reserve powers and the Concurrent List can bring out the kind of reforms necessary to make the autonomy of the States real and credible. This will also indicate the extent of command over resources which the States require in order to sustain that autonomy.

But when one looks carefully at the problems of economic regulation and planning, one finds that the provisions of the Constitution form an inadequate starting point for devising systematic reform measures. The inherently interdependent nature of economic relationships makes it impossible to partition out clear-cut domains of responsibility for the Central and the State governments. If all the governments within the Indian Union had agreed to pursue *laissez faire* and free trade policies, thereby minimizing the role of the State in economic affairs, then perhaps a simple scheme of the devolution of power could be a workable solution. Even there the scheme of financing the expenditures of the Central government could be a matter of serious conflict among the regional authorities, as the periodic drama at Strassbourg enacted by the heads of sovereign States constituting the European Economic Community would demonstrate. But, in the Indian situation a regime of *laissez faire* and free trade is not a practical alternative; and in my opinion not at all desirable either.

If we want the State system in India to play an active role in economic and social spheres, then we need to understand the nature of those interdependencies. Only then can we design appropriate institutions and adopt appropriate rules and procedures which could enable a decentralised political system manage an activist economic regime with some measure of efficiency. A few illustrative examples can bring out the nature of these interdependencies.

In any scheme of federalism, currency and banking will have to be centrally administered. If it becomes the exclusive responsibility of the Central Government, then

what will prevent the government at the Centre to create money and to ration credits according to its narrow sectional interests? Through money-creation and credit-rationing it is possible to finance a lot of patronage distribution and governmental inefficiencies. Why should people in some parts of the country suffer inflation and economic decline only because the government at the Centre (or at some State capital) goes on financing mismanaged public enterprises and other dubious schemes of public expenditure by borrowing from the Central Bank?

Another example. In any scheme of federalism, foreign trade and the management of the exchange rate will have to be the responsibility of some central authority. Take a region of the country which specialises in the production of exportable commodities and buys most of its food and other consumption goods from outside the region. The central authority can choose an exchange rate and a trade regime which can be highly injurious to the welfare of the people living in that region. This is not entirely a hypothetical example; one may recall the protests coming from Kerala some years ago.

A third example is the case of price fixing, particularly of foodgrains, which affects the real incomes of the farmers and the non-farm consumers. Everyone is familiar with the tensions generated around this question every year and with the inter-regional dimensions of these tensions. But one should remember that the Central Government does not always need to have direct power to fix prices. If it has control over foreign trade and credit policies, in most situations it can indirectly influence the price of foodgrains in the country.

The Central Government is responsible for the railway system in the country. The railways account for a substantial chunk of public investments in India. The investment programmes of the railways and the freight rates charged by them on important bulk commodities (like coal, cement, foodgrains etc.) have an important bearing on

regional development. Moreover, certain kinds of routes are maintained, even though these are uneconomical. The Indian Railways describe them as part of their 'social burdens'. These 'social burdens' are justified on grounds of national security or inter-regional equity and sometimes on the grounds of promoting the economic growth of backward regions in the long run. Is it possible to work out a rational and consistent basis for these investments on promotional or equity-related grounds?

Recently, in connection with the controversy around the take-over bids by certain non-resident Indians, the importance of the behaviour of the financial institutions in the public sector has come into the lime-light. These institutions can easily topple any management group in the private sector and install any other in its place. The public sector financial institutions are managed like every other economic enterprise owned by government. In the ultimate analysis, the decisions depend on the discretion of the individuals running the government. If it wants, the Central Government can use the enormous resources controlled by these institutions to help or to penalise any State of the Union. What can prevent them from doing so?

The Planning Commission is now essentially the secretariat of a Ministry of the Central Government. The Commission is responsible for the entire investment allocation of the country, particularly in the public sector. The location of an investment project of the size of a State Plan can crucially influence the economic development of a region. But, as yet, the Indian planning process has not evolved any explicit criterion or a *formal* mechanism for deciding on these issues. The decisions are made on the basis of informal consultations, the will of important people and, sometimes, on the fury of local agitations. A rational planning process in a federal set-up requires the explicit computation of the various trade-offs, informed bargaining among the federating units so that the knowledge and the self-interests

of the people at the ground-level are harnessed and harmonized. The present method of distributing largesse from New Delhi at the judgement of the bosses there, occasionally tempered by the violence of mob fury, is not only wasteful but also incompatible with the spirit of federalism.

One can go on adding to this list of instances demonstrating the complex nature of the inter-regional impacts of economic policies. I shall just give one more example to bring out another dimension of regional interdependence at the policy level. Most people agree that India should have a population policy. It is also recognised that public health, education and community-level extension work are the crucial factors which influence the fertility behaviour of families. These programmes cannot be organised all over the country from New Delhi; they will have to be organised at the State (or lower) level. But if the country as a whole has a population policy which needs to be monitored and administered by a Central authority, then the States with good performance in this field need to be encouraged and negligent ones penalised. A straightforward allocation of federal funds on the basis of population alone—an easy principle to adopt in any federal set-up—will provide perverse incentives. Is it possible to think of a machinery and a mechanism for determining purposive allocation among the federal units?

What these illustrative examples bring out is that the manner in which planning and economic policies are formulated and implemented in India is not quite compatible with the spirit of federalism. It seems to be meant for a single-command framework of administration, which can be arbitrary and wasteful. A decentralisation of decision-making in the spirit of federalism is capable of reducing arbitrariness and economic waste. But such an outcome cannot be achieved merely by transferring some of the powers from New Delhi to the State capitals—although some transfer in that direction is desirable. What is

equally important is to create institutions of autonomous character, which can preserve some distance from both the Central and the State governments.

The principal candidates in this category are the Reserve Bank of India and the Planning Commission. Since the primary function of the RBI is to ration credits to the governments at the Centre and the States as well as to different economic activities, it just does not make sense in any scheme of meaningful federalism to make the RBI a department of the Central Government. The Bank should have a far greater measure of autonomy than it currently enjoys.

Similarly, the Planning Commission should become the secretariat of the National Development Council and thereby distance itself from the government at the Centre. It should develop working relationships with the various agencies of the Central and the State governments in a symmetric manner. It should provide technical assistance to the various State governments as well as the various ministries of the Central Government in formulating their plans. Only by playing a role of this kind can it harmonize the capabilities and the intentions of the development agencies in the different regions and sectors.

I have mentioned earlier the important roles played by the financial institutions in the public sector and the Indian Railways in influencing the economic development of the different regions of the country. In these cases, it is not merely a question of removing the arbitrariness in their functioning; it is also a question of avoiding waste and introducing operational efficiency. It is important that there should be a consistently rational basis for deciding which among the different backward areas should get promotional investments from the railways and at what period of time. There should be a rational basis for deciding which category of traffic should get subsidies and to what extent. Some of these decisions will have to come from the political arena. But in a federal polity this process needs to be open

and separable from the day-to-day activities of an enterprise. An autonomous railway administration should work with a clear mandate to operate on the basis of economic efficiency. The Central and the State governments operating respectively through Parliament and the Assemblies should decide the quantum and the kind of subsidies which should be given on promotional or equity-related grounds.

These arguments are applicable not only for the Indian Railways but for a wide variety of economic enterprises in the public sector. The Electricity Boards and the State Transport authorities managed by the State governments should not be run as departmental undertakings. If a State wants to subsidise its electricity consumers or bus-users, it should do so openly through its budget. These economic enterprises themselves should be managed as autonomous entities, motivated solely by the dictates of sound economic management.

If the various publicly-owned economic enterprises at the Central as well as the State level become truly autonomous, one can see a clear role for the public sector financial institutions. They will have to cater to the need for financial resources of economic enterprises in both the public and the private sectors. Thus, they will have to take an active interest in the management of these enterprises. Inevitably, the public sector financial institutions will have to distance themselves from the political bosses so that narrow sectarian interests are not allowed to dominate their behaviour.

I think I can summarise the basic proposition I have been trying to make in this note. In a federal set-up, there is need for autonomous institutions which can play the important role of mediating between the Central and the State governments. Furthermore, if the State system is to play an active role in the economy, it is important to put some distance between the political process and the management of publicly owned enterprises. Unfortunately, in India the culture of autonomy in public institutions has not developed adequately. In fact,

the trend is towards the curtailment of this kind of autonomy. But it is difficult to visualise a functioning federal system without a network of autonomous public institutions entrusted with the responsibility of regulation in the domain of inter-regional linkages. Considering the fact that even such vital matters as inter-State river disputes remain unresolved for decades, we have a long way to go in creating an adequate infrastructure of federalism in India.

While I have been emphasizing the importance of certain structural features of a federal system, it is, of course, not the case that a few autonomous institutions and a number of impersonal rules alone can make the system smooth and conflict-free. In fact, there will always be need for vigilance and democratic struggle for resisting encroachments on autonomy. But even today the State governments are not doing enough to fight for their legitimate rights even within the existing framework. I shall give just one example of how they are losing by default.

For years now the State governments have been complaining that the Centre is not collecting enough revenue from income tax because it has to be shared with the States. It is true that over the years indirect taxes have acquired greater and greater importance as the source of revenue for the Central exchequer. But actually the Central Government has been doing even more than that. It has been borrowing money from the public by offering incentives in the form of exemption from income tax and thereby financing its budget deficits. Now, if the revenues from income tax are to be shared, it can legitimately be argued that all resources collected by using the power to tax income should also be shared. Why then do the States not demand to share these categories of market borrowings by the Central Government? If they had access to additional credits in the manner of the Central Government, surely they would be better off, and the spirit of the Constitution is on their side. But, it seems, the arguments and the debates on Centre-State relations have not progressed much beyond angry rhetoric.

Financial relations

S. GULATI

THIS paper is an attempt to highlight issues in Indian federal finance that demand urgent attention in the course of any review of federal financial relationships. Basically, what needs to be ensured is that these relationships should subserve the federal cause of keeping the various units of the federation reasonably content, if not altogether satisfied that the intra-federal financial arrangements were working justly and meeting adequately the requirements of the system over the years. The minimum that has to be ensured is that these financial arrangements do not become so unsatisfactory in terms of equity, adequacy or both, as to threaten the very existence and working of the federal system.

In the scheme of things laid down in the Indian Constitution, the Finance Commission, to be appointed by the President every five years or earlier, was expected to recommend whatever adjustments in intra-federal transfer of budgetary funds were considered necessary to meet the changing requirements of the system. But these adjustments, it was evidently believed, would be possible to accommodate within the

framework of the arrangements for intra-federal financial transfers provided for in the Constitution. Once accepted by Parliament, these recommendations became mandatory, so that transfer of funds effected in pursuance of them could be said to have statutory sanction.

In the Indian scheme, intra-federal financial transfers were, from the beginning, to take the form of transfer of funds from the Centre to the States. It was clear, at the very outset, that given the various functional responsibilities assigned to the governments in the States, the financial powers allocated to them were rather inadequate.

While the transfer of funds from the Centre to the States has been sizeable these past 30 years or so, it has taken place in forms very largely outside the ambit of the Finance Commission. A little over 60 per cent of the budgetary funds from the Centre to the States in the past 30 years (1951-81) were in the form of plan and discretionary assistance and only 40 per cent were transferred in pursuance of

the recommendations of the Finance Commissions appointed from time to time.

Although the weightage of the latter transfers, generally referred to as statutory transfers because of the statutory sanction behind them, has improved in the wake of the Sixth and Seventh Finance Commissions' awards, it still would be reasonably correct to say that they play a less than central role in the federal financial arrangements, the way these arrangements have evolved in our country.¹ When one takes account also of the non-budgetary transfers, which amount to at least 40 per cent² of the aggregate transfers (including budgetary transfers) the weightage of statutory transfers in the aggregate would be naturally even smaller.

A view could be, and has been, considered that such a development was bound to take place because the framers of our Constitution did not envisage, and provide for, the requirements of economic planning. The proposition is difficult to accept fully, however, for the simple reason that Jawaharlal Nehru and several others, who actively participated in the constitution-making exercise, were also ardent advocates of economic planning. It is just impossible to believe that they did not envisage the onset of planning.

1. The relative weightage of the various types of Central budgetary transfers to the States has undergone quite some change over a period of thirty years. This can be seen from the following table:

Period	Statutory transfers	Plan transfers	Discretionary transfers	Total transfers
1951-56	31.2	24.5	44.3	100.00
1956-61	32.0	36.9	31.1	100.00
1961-66	28.4	44.9	26.7	100.00
1966-69	33.3	33.1	33.6	100.00
1969-74	35.9	23.4	40.7	100.00
1974-79	43.0	30.5	26.0	100.00
1979-81	43.2	30.5	26.3	100.00

Source: Report of Seventh Finance Commission 1978 and K.K. George, 'Centre-State Financial Flows and Inter-State Disparities in India' (mimeo) 1982.

2. See I.S. Gulati and K.K. George, 'Inter State Redistribution through Institutional Finance,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Special Number, August 1978 and K.K. George, 'Centre-State Financial Flows and Inter-State Disparities in India', (mimeo), 1982.

However, Nehru and others could possibly have thought that the framework for Centre-State financial transfers being laid down within the Constitution, was flexible enough adequately to meet the demands of economic planning as and when planning was ushered in. At the same time, they probably attached considerable importance to establishing a framework of financial relations which enjoined taking a total, rather than partial, view of the overall resource position of the Central and State governments taken together, so that decisions regarding the distribution of resources between the Centre and the States or the one hand and between the States themselves on the other, could be taken in that light. That in actual practice things did not happen in quite the way it was expected is altogether a different matter.

already in motion. The expanding role of the Planning Commission in this respect may be offered as evidence of such movement. Viewed thus, even the practice of including certain guidelines in the Presidential Order appointing the Finance Commission may be considered by some, at least, as furthering the objective of the framers of our Constitution. For, several, if not all, of the guidelines so far laid down in the aforementioned orders can be said to urge the Finance Commission to take a total view of things before determining Centre-State and inter State allocations.

Unless one is looking for a totality of view for its own sake, or for form rather than substance, one must, however, ask the question whether the fact that the Planning Commission now plays such a central role in the channelling of funds from the Centre to the States can be said to have brought about a major shift in the pattern of financial transfers, a shift that one could ascribe to the concerned bodies taking a more total, or less fragmented, view of things with respect to both financial devolution from the Centre to the State and inter-State distribution of the amounts devolved.

Under the present provisions of our Constitution, the States are entitled to a share of the Centre's revenues derived from only a few taxes, principally income-tax and excise duties. These sharable taxes together account for something like 55 per cent of the tax revenues currently raised by the Centre. The share of the States in the Centre's revenue from its sharable taxes works out to a little over 45 per cent. As a portion, however, of the total resource transfer taking place annually from the Centre to the States, tax sharing has, lately, accounted for 40 per cent.³ Under

3. Since for the entire 30 years period, 1951-81, the proportion accounted for by tax sharing in the total budgetary transfers was lower at 32 per cent (See K.K. George, 1982, *op. cit.*), it is easy to see that the importance of tax sharing in total budgetary transfers has lately been on the increase. This has come about particularly after the award of the Seventh Finance Commission which relies considerably more on tax sharing as the major instrument of statutory transfers

the Seventh Finance Commission's award, a major departure was made from the past practice in that the share of grants in statutory transfers was drastically reduced from around one quarter to less than 10 per cent.

Still, the States continue to receive rather large amounts by way of grants with the difference however that their share in the statutory transfers has been drastically reduced. Non-statutory (plan and discretionary) grants have one decided advantage over statutory grants, of being decided upon on a year to year basis, largely when the annual State plans are finalized. Therefore, the inflation factor can easily be pressed and allowed for in their fixation. Thus, all told, grants have retained an important role for themselves since they still amount to not less than one-quarter of the total Central budgetary transfers to the States.

Grants apart, the other major instrument of resource transfer to the States through the Central Budget is the capital account. Transfers on capital account take the forms of loans and advances from the Centre to the States. In recent years, they have accounted for about one-third of the total resource transfer taking place through the budget, though for the thirty-year period, 1951-81, they comprised 40 per cent of the total resource transfer. So, clearly, in relative terms, the dependence of the States on loans as an instrument of central devolution can be said to be coming down.

Given the total picture and the role of various instruments so far in effecting resources transfer from the Centre to the States, two major issues can be identified. One concerns the magnitude of total resource transfer and the other concerns the choice of instruments, namely tax sharing, grants and loans, for effecting the transfer.

It is with respect to the magnitude of transfers that the question of

than the earlier commissions, certainly more than the Sixth Finance Commission did.

whether or not the States are getting their due arises. In their terms of reference, both the Sixth and Seventh Finance Commissions were asked to take into account while making recommendations, among other considerations the commitments as well as the resources at the command of the Centre. No distinction, it may be noted, was made between tax and non-tax resources, revenue account and capital account resources or internal and external resources. Nor was any distinction drawn with regard to the various commitments of the Centre. The Eighth Finance Commission also has similar terms of reference.

In this context, it is relevant to note that the Seventh Finance Commission made specific mention of the demand raised by the States of West Bengal and Tripura for the allocation of 75 per cent of Central revenues. The Commission rejected the demand on the grounds that it was not based on an estimation of the needs of the States vis-à-vis the needs of the Centre. But the Commission itself made no attempt to offer its estimate of what, in its judgment, would be a reasonably fair proportion of the Centre's resources which the States, as a whole, could ask for.

One must hasten to add here that a view could, no doubt, be taken that a Commission's award reflects its judgment with respect to the extent to which the States should reasonably partake in the Centre's resources through the stream of statutory transfers, given its assessment of the Centre's resources and commitments. Perhaps, every Finance Commission made a judgment with respect to the Centre's resources and commitments before determining the statutory devolutions to the States, regardless of whether the Presidential Order explicitly required the Commission to take this consideration into account.

Unfortunately, no Finance Commission, including the Seventh, considered it appropriate to indicate, even in the broadest of terms, what proportion of its resources the Centre needed to keep with itself

for meeting its commitments, essential and not so essential. The fact that statutory devolutions need not, and in fact, do not absorb fully the portion of its resources the Centre could reasonably do without, does not preclude a Finance Commission from making, and then expressing, a judgment with respect to the total resource picture.

The Planning Commission so far has played the role of allocating only the residual, i.e., sums which could be taken out of the Central part of the resource pool for plan and other assistance to the States after allowing for statutory devolutions. Did this body feel obliged to take a view of the total financial position? One could always argue that in order to decide on the residual itself the Planning Commission has to make a judgment on the overall sharing, an argument that cannot be altogether ruled out.

Thus, on a generous interpretation of things as they are, possibly both the Commissions first judge the reasonable sharing of total resources between the Centre and the States and then the allocations which come within their respective purviews. Still, two criticisms of what is possibly being done will be quite valid. Firstly, there is little evidence that the two bodies coordinate in forming the above judgment, though the suggestion of one common member between the two was possibly meant to help achieve this. Secondly, the States and the general public are still in the dark with respect to any such judgment on the overall sharing of resources between the Centre and the States.

Taking the totality of the Centre's resources (tax, non-tax and capital), the States' share thereof came down from over 40 per cent to 31 per cent between the first and fifth plan periods,⁴ clearly revealing a downward trend in the share of the States. Is there any way of finding out why this share has been declining? Assuming that it was a conscious decision made by one or the other

4. As a proportion of the total resources raised by the Centre on revenue and capital accounts, the amounts transferred to the States through the budgets

Commission or by both together, should it not have been made public? It cannot be that this issue does not bother the Commissions in the course of their respective deliberations, but instead of facing the question squarely and offering judgment, both the Commissions seem to have shunned it. But can it be shunned for all time?

That the States have also to make their own resource efforts within the spheres allocated to them under the Constitution, goes without saying. The assessment of the Finance Commissions has been that, taken as a whole, the States have not lagged behind the Centre with regard to tax effort, though this effort has not been uniform.

However, given the position of clear financial imbalance in which the States have been placed under the Constitution, the question of a reasonably fair sharing by the Centre of its vastly larger resources with the States has to be faced squarely. And the question of fair sharing cannot be tackled adequately in segments. A total view must be taken of the resource at the command of the Centre and the States and its sharing should be decided upon taking into account their respective responsibilities under the Constitution. A Finance Commission would, I believe, be fully within its rights not only to make an overall assessment in order

work out as under for the period 1951-52 to 1974-79:

Period	Aggregate amount raised by the Centre	Aggregate transfer from the Centre to the States	Amounts raised as a percentage of the resources raised at the centres
1951-56	3,412	1,431	43
1956-61	8,080	2,868	36
1961-66	17,654	5,600	32
1966-69	16,714	5,347	32
1969-74	41,380	15,101	36
1974-79	82,422	25,578	31

On the basis of the figures available for the years 1979-80 to 1983-84 (Budget), the share of the states in the aggregate Central resources works out to be somewhat higher (34 per cent) than during 1974-79.

to formulate its award for statutory devolution but also to make the results of such an assessment fully known while recommending the award to Parliament. If, however, the Finance Commissions feel that they are precluded from taking such a total view, given the provisions of the Constitution, let the Planning Commission do the exercise and make its results widely known.

As for the choice between the instruments of resource transfer, the position so far has been that while statutory transfers have depended largely, and increasingly, on tax sharing with a relatively less and less important role assigned to grants, non-statutory transfers have been made in the form of loans and grants with grants playing again a relatively smaller but significant role. Grants still account for a sizeable part of the total resource transfer through the budgets from the Centre to the States. Thus, while about two-thirds of the funds currently being transferred from the Centre to the States are not repayable, being in the form of either tax shares (41 per cent) or grants (25 per cent), one-third of the funds going to the States is repayable, being in the form of interest bearing, mostly medium term, loans.

Naturally, the States are incurring huge liabilities in the process. This is despite the fact that the loans content of resource transfer has been declining over the years. While 55 per cent of the resource transfer in the first plan-period, 1951-56, was in the form of loans, their share was 35 per cent in 1974-79 and has been somewhat lower in more recent years. All the same, the share of loans is still sufficiently large and its servicing will create problems, as in the past.

This leads us to an important question bearing on Centre-State financial relations in India. Once it is accepted that (a) the Centre has to share its resources with the States at a certain rate over a sufficiently long period of time, and (b) the allocation of these funds between the States has to be made on the basis of certain macro-criteria (as is, for instance, the case already

with plan assistance to States), why is it at all necessary, one is entitled to ask, to transfer to the States such a large proportion of these funds in the form of loans? To suggest, however, that all or most Central transfers should be made to the States on a non-repayable basis could be objected upon on several grounds.

Let us examine two of these possible objectives. It can be argued that at any given point there would always exist a backlog of outstanding debt owed by various States to the Centre. Loans in the past may or may not have been made in accordance with the criteria which are acceptable today. So, if past loans are recoverable, it will add to the available pool of resources at the disposal of the Centre with which the criteria of today can be promoted.⁵

Pursued to its logical conclusion, this argument should lead one to ask that all Central transfers to the States be made in the form of loans because the criteria of tomorrow may not be the same as those of today. At the practical plane, to the extent that the correction of past imbalances in financial transfers is called for, this can effectively be achieved through the allocation of currently transferable funds, without their being supplemented by recoveries of past loans, if in the allocation of the current funds the imbalances of the past allocation are also taken due note of.

It would be appropriate to refer in the above context to the manner in which the problem of the outstanding debt of the States to the Centre has been dealt with in the past. The experience with earlier exercises, including the one attempted by the Sixth Finance Commission, has demonstrated that ultimately the benefit of write off or rescheduling accrues to the States more or less proportionately to the amounts outstanding. On grounds of equity, therefore, not much is gained by keeping up the fiction of outstanding

5. This was a major argument used by the Sixth Finance Commission to reject the plea for writing off the outstanding Central loans to the States.

ing debts and then have them periodically written off or rescheduled.

There is also the question of efficiency. Servicing obligation is supposed to impose a sort of discipline on the borrower. Should not the States be placed under some such discipline so as to ensure that they are deterred from spending without sufficient care funds in the raising of which they themselves are hardly involved? Already, as indicated above, two-thirds of the resource transfer is taking place in non-repayable form and if the States can be relied upon to spend that much without being brought under the discipline of loan servicing, why cannot the whole of the resource transfer be made to them in non-repayable form?

Whatever be the future weightage of loans in resource transfers from the Centre to the States, the question whether transfers in non-repayable forms should be made through tax sharing or grants is also going to be of considerable importance. Insofar as statutory transfers are concerned, the Seventh Finance Commission took, very rightly in my judgment, the view that the bulk of Central transfers under its scheme should be through tax sharing rather than grants. Accordingly, the Commission's award raised the weightage of tax devolution to 92% as against the preceding award's weightage to tax devolution of 70%. This was achieved principally by raising the States' share in the Centre's excise revenue from 20% to 40%. By this single measure, the Commission was able not only to raise the weightage of tax devolution in statutory transfers, but also assure to the States greater participation in the most buoyant of the Central taxes and thereby reduce the State's exposure to inflation.

Income tax too is sharable by the Centre with the States. In fact, the Seventh Finance Commission raised the States' share of income tax revenue from 80% to 85%. However, since the Commission retained the old basis of inter-State distribution of income tax revenue, i.e., of distributing 90% on the

basis of population and 10% on the basis of contribution, the overall per capita distribution of income tax revenue inclined in favour of the relatively richer States. On the other hand, inter-State distribution of Central excise revenue has tended to be in favour of the relatively poorer States, particularly since the 4th plan period.⁶

Thus, all tax sharing is not necessarily an unmixed blessing, at least not for every State. Still, between tax sharing and grants, practically all the States have always indicated to the Finance Commissions their preference for the former after their experience of virtually unabated inflation. Evidently, no amount of cushioning for inflation, attempted so far in the fixation of absolute amounts of grants, has provided an adequate hedge against the erosion caused by price rise.

However, so far tax sharing has been resorted to only with respect to statutory financial transfers which have played a less than central role in our federal financial arrangements. But must the extension of tax sharing as an instrument of financial transfers be necessarily tied down to what we have described as statutory, as distinct from non-statutory, arrangements? So far as I can see, there is no provision in the Constitution which can be said to preclude Parliament from deciding that even non-statutory devolution of tax revenues from the Centre to the States should take place on the basis of tax sharing rather than in the form of grants. Such devolution might still be made at the recommendation of not the Finance Commission but the Planning Commission. That would indeed ensure the States' plans against erosion on account of inflation and do away with the need for annual exercises to compensate the States on this score.

The broad pattern of financial transfers that evolved in the fifties was that while statutory transfers, i.e., transfers under the aegis of the Finance Commission, tried to cover the non-plan revenue account gaps of the States, plan transfers coming

under the purview of the Planning Commission sought to plug the plan gaps in the States' resources. Now, the gap filling approach, particularly in so far as it has been applied to statutory transfers, has not gone unnoticed. In fact, it has come in for considerable criticism on the score that (a) it encourages imprudent budgeting and (b) it disregards considerations of equity. Successive Finance Commissions themselves have shown full awareness of the substance of this criticism and have attempted to get away from pure gap-filling by using various normative yardsticks in the assessment of gaps. All the same, there clearly prevails a strong feeling of helplessness in this regard. Statutory transfers have continued to be determined with a view principally to covering the States' non-plan gaps, calculated on the basis of the States' expenditure commitments on the one hand and their prevailing revenue levels on the other.

The fact that the Seventh Finance Commission disavowed a negative role of filling the non-plan revenue account gaps and sought instead to ensure that its scheme of fiscal transfers left as many of the States as possible with surpluses on revenue account did not really amount to giving up the gap filling approach. Non-plan gaps were still worked out by the Commission as before and then sought to be covered. All that this particular Commission attempted to do really different was that instead of filling the gaps and only balancing the non-plan revenue account, it provided the States, particularly the poorer States, with some surpluses.

But the distribution of surpluses between States was still highly regressive. On the basis of the Commission's own calculation, Orissa's surplus worked out to Rs. 15 per capita as against Rs. 676 for Haryana. This, however, was bound to happen; because of an obstinate adherence to the basic approach that a State's expenditure commitments, over and above what it can raise in revenue from its existing taxes, duties and affairs have got to be covered regardless of whether it is a poor or not so poor State, regardless

6. See K.K. George (1982), *op. cit.*

of whether or not the State has sufficiently exploited its own revenue potential and regardless also of whether the States's expenditure commitments are excessive or not in relative terms.

Wether or not one subscribes to the view that the gap filling approach to the Centre-State financial transfers is the direct outcome of deciding upon these transfers compartmentally, statutory transfers by the Finance Commissions and plan and other transfers under the Planning Commission's auspices, one has to concede that the introduction of the planning dimension and its continuing reinforcement, have not resulted in our breaking away from this approach.⁷ The maximum one can say in favour of the planning process is that attempts have been made over the years, largely at the political plane, to work out and introduce an independent formula for determining the inter-State allocation of a part of plan assistance. Thus, plan transfers to the States have served more to determine the size of State plans than to balance the State plan budgets. To the extent this has been possible to achieve, plan transfers have also shown an increasing trend towards reduced regressivity, if not progressivity, in terms of per capita transfers to various States, poor and not so poor.⁸

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about the various non-statu-

7. It will be quite in order to argue that the gap filling approach was inherited from the pre-independence days. What the onset of planning did was to oblige the Finance Commissions to confine themselves to covering only the non-plan gaps on revenue account, leaving the Planning Commission to take care of the plan gaps for revenue and capital accounts combined.

8. It is since the 4th plan that Central plan assistance is allocated among the States on the basis of a formula, originally called the Gadgil Formula and subsequently, modified Gadgil Formula, approved by the National Development Council. The original formula gave 60 per cent weightage to population and 10 per cent to per capita income (the latter for a negatively related allocation among States with lower than average per capita income). Subsequently, for the sixth plan, the formula was revised to increase the weightage for per capita income to 20 per cent. But it must, at the same time, be

tory non-plan transfers to States, which, when clubbed together, are referred to as discretionary transfers. These account for some 20 per cent of the total transfers currently taking place through the budgets from the Centre to the States. It might be added however that in the determination of the inter-State allocation of even discretionary transfers, the Planning Commission plays quite a decisive role. In the circumstances, it is difficult to say whether, when one draws a distinction between the political and institutional aspects of the planning process,⁹ the Planning Commission, as an institution by itself, can be said to have played a particularly equalising role.

Nor has its participation in the determination of statutory transfers, through a membership on the Finance Commission, brought about a progressive inter-State allocation of statutory transfers even if one were to concede that their inter-State distribution is somewhat less regressive now than in the past. At the same time, as has been explained above, the gap filling approach has persisted in the determination of statutory transfers.

If it is desired that future Centre-State financial arrangements deliver the goods much more equitably and with greater regard for efficiency in

bome in mind that apart from the non-equalising elements within the formula itself, the formula based assistance covered only a part of the Central plan assistance. For the sixth plan, only 50 per cent of the Central plan assistance is to be allocated under the modified Gadgil formula.

9. A distinction is being drawn here between the role of the Planning Commission on the one hand and the role of the National Development Council on the other. The inter-State allocation of Central assistance for State plan is, as indicated, already determined on the basis of a formula approved by the National Development Council. On the other hand, the inter-State allocation of discretionary assistance is, as far as one can make out, decided upon largely by the Planning Commission, in consultation with the concerned Central Ministries, after discussions with respective states, but without reference to the National Development Council. It is the former which has been found to be the least regressive of the various types of resources transfer from the Centre to the States.

budgeting, the present institutional arrangements may well have to be changed substantially. The readiness to consider changing the institutional arrangements is not enough however. It is necessary to be clear about (a) the broad objectives these arrangements should serve hereafter and (b) the instruments to be placed at their disposal. In a sense, the failure on the part of our constitution-makers to spell out the broad objectives which financial transfers from the Centre to the States should have sought to serve, can be blamed for the fact that in the determination of inter-State shares of the Central funds going to the States under the dispensations of the Finance Commission, allocation among the States was made on a basis that failed to ensure overall progressivity and in a manner that did not promote efficiency.

Although it would sound retrograde, on the ground of restricting the freedom of the concerned Commission, it is worthwhile considering whether in the light of the experience gained over the past 30 years, it would not serve the ends of justice better if a broad objective in terms of reduction of disparities in the fiscal capacity of different States, given the inter-State disparities in the levels of income and development, were explicitly written into the Constitution itself. Failing that, Parliament could perhaps lay it down as an objective to be pursued. Certainly, the latter course is preferable to the Central Government attempting to influence the Finance Commissions through the Presidential Orders, as has been done in the recent past every time a new Commission is appointed.

On the whole, courage and tenacity to raise and debate questions is called for, however irreverent to the existing arrangements, but without disturbing the basic democratic framework of the Constitution. Something positive is bound to emerge then by way of a financial arrangement that has a statutory constitutional sanction behind it and which, at the same time, plays a more central role in the financial transfers from the Centre to the States.

Administrative relations

S. GUHAN

A comprehensive discussion of administrative aspects of Centre-State relations will need to take into account the entire gamut of such relations — legislative, financial, judicial etc. — since under every one of these aspects, administration or some exercise of executive power is involved. Also, in as much as executive power is based on legislative authority, no discussion of administrative aspects can be meaningful unless it refers back to the entire scheme of the sharing of powers between the Centre and the States in the Constitution of India, including the location of residuary powers with the Centre. This will take us to a basic examination of the whole of the Constitution in terms of its history and of its wording as well as working.

The discussion of administrative aspects in Centre-State relations in this note has obviously to be much more modest in its scope. It will have to be confined to a discussion of the set of constitutional provisions and functional arrangements and practices which in most discussions of the subject have come to be grouped under Centre-State 'administrative relations' in broad distinction to 'legislative relations' dealt with in Chapter I of Part XI of the Constitution, 'financial relations' which are the subject matter of Part XII and the provisions relating to the judiciary in Parts V and VI. As a theme-paper, its aim will be to describe Centre-State administrative relations, the conflicts and issues that have emerged, the context in which the debate on these issues has been, and is being, carried on and, finally, the kind of framework within which these issues need to be tackled in the Indian context...

It will be useful to start with listing the provisions concerning Centre-State administrative relations expressly covered as such in the Constitution. They deal with what might broadly be called the political-administrative relations of the Centre with the States and relate to (a) Governors, (b) Public Services, (c) Public Order and (d) Directives to States. In essentials, these provisions can be annotated as follows.

The Governor is appointed by the President (Art. 155) and holds office at his pleasure (Art. 156). Formally, the executive power of the State is vested in the Governor (Art. 154). In the exercise of these powers, he is to be aided and advised by a Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head (Art. 163). However, there is room for the Governor to exercise his individual judgement in the following matters. He has to appoint the Chief Minister, i.e., choose for this position the leader of a party or a coalition that can command the confidence of the Legislative Assembly (Art. 164). He can summon and prorogue houses of the Legislature and dissolve the Legislative Assembly (Art. 174). He can withhold assent to Bills or reserve a Bill for the consideration of the President (Art. 200). In the former case, he may recommend reconsideration or amendments to the Legislature but cannot eventually withhold assent when once again the Bill is passed with or without amendment (Art. 200). Formally, no such constraint applies to the President (Art. 201). Thus, in theory, the Governor can frustrate the Legislature by elevating a Bill up into cold storage. He

can also keep a Bill pending for his assent without any time-limit.

The Governor is in addition a watch-dog. He has to be kept informed of all Cabinet decisions and can call for any information relating to the administration of the State. He can insist that a decision taken by an individual Minister be submitted to the consideration of the Cabinet (Art. 167). He can notify the President that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the Constitution, enabling the President on receipt of such a report, to impose Central rule on that State (Art. 356).

At the commencement of the Constitution, the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service have been specified as all-India services common to the Union and the States. Other all-India services can be created by a two-thirds vote of the Council of States wherever it is considered necessary or expedient in the national interest to do so. The Union can regulate the requirement and the conditions of service of persons appointed to such services (Art. 312). While the Governor (i.e., the State Government) is the competent authority to appoint them, it is the President alone who has powers to remove the Chairman or any other member of a State Public Service Commission (Art. 317).

The maintenance of public order and the use of the police are responsibilities of the States (entries 1 and 2 in List-II of the Seventh Schedule). However, under Article 355, it is the duty of the Union 'to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.' This provision has been interpreted by the Centre as giving it freedom to deploy the Central Reserve Police (CRP) within States without prior consultation with them¹.

1. Article 257A was inserted in the 42nd Amendment (1976) to specifically

There are several contingencies specified in the Constitution under which the Centre can issue directives to the States. These may relate to the drawing up and execution of schemes deemed to be essential to the welfare of Scheduled Tribes in the States (Art. 339); to the provision of adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue in primary schools to children belonging to linguistic minority groups (Art. 350A); to the construction and maintenance of means of communication declared to be of national or military importance; and to measures to be taken for the protection of railways within the State (Art. 257). If the President is satisfied that the financial stability and credit of a State are threatened, he can declare a financial emergency. This would permit the Centre to give directions to the State to observe specified canons of financial propriety (Art. 360). The President can proclaim a general emergency if he is satisfied that conditions exist whereby the security of India or any part of it is threatened whether by war or external aggression or armed rebellion (Art. 352).²

Under such conditions, directions relating to the exercise of any of the executive powers of the State can be given (Art. 353). Directives can be issued to a State to ensure its compliance with laws made by Parliament or applicable to the State (Art. 256) or, more generally, to ensure that executive actions of the State do not impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union (Art. 257). If a State fails to comply with any of the directions given by the Centre under any of these provisions, the Centre has the sanction to impose President's rule under Article 356 (Art. 365).

The foregoing topics cover the main areas in the political administration of the country which have a bearing on Centre-State relations

empower the Centre to do this but this Article was repealed in the 44th Amendment (1978)

2. 'armed rebellion' was substituted for 'internal disturbance' in the 44th Amendment (1978).

ships. The interface between the Centre and the States is very pervasive in economic administration as well. The Centre has exclusive jurisdiction in respect of communications, currency, foreign loans, banking and insurance. In several other functional areas such as food, agriculture, industry, education, health, family planning, social welfare, irrigation and power, the Centre exercises both authority and influence derived from jurisdiction assigned to it in List I of the Seventh Schedule or acquired under the Concurrent subjects enumerated in List III. We may turn to a description of the major functional areas in which Centre-State administrative relations are involved.

In the *food administration* of the country, the Centre plays a major role. It has powers to fix procurement prices (entry 34 in List III) and to regulate the movement and distribution of food stuffs (entry 33 in List III). In the Food Corporation of India (FCI), it has the agency for internal procurement. Import decisions are taken by the Centre because of its control over foreign exchange. The national food pool, which secures supplies from surplus States and from imports and allocates them to deficit States, is thus operated by the Centre.

In *agriculture*, the Centre undertakes research activities on an all-India basis under the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), funds a number of centrally-sponsored schemes, and has a major financing institution in its control in the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Forests are in the Concurrent List (entry 17A in List III)³ and fisheries beyond territorial waters in List I (entry 57).

In the sphere of *industries*, petroleum, oil and mineral development fall in List I. Entry 52 in List I gives powers to the Centre over industries, 'the control of which by the Union is declared by Parliament by law to be expedient in the public interest.' Under this provision, the

3. 'Forests' were transferred from the State List (List II) to the Concurrent List (List III) in the 42nd Amendment (1976).

Industries (Development and Regulation) Act of 1951 has been enacted which gives industrial licensing powers to the Centre. The Centre controls clearances for capital issues, for the import of capital goods and of raw materials, and for foreign collaborations. It operates a number of advisory, promotional and financing agencies for small industries, khadi and village industries, handicrafts and handlooms. Nation-wide industrial financing institutions such as the IDBI, IFCI, ICICI, LIC and UTI are under Central control. Locational decisions on Central investments in the public sector are matters of crucial interest to the States.

Education is a Concurrent subject (entry 25 in List III)⁴. The Centre has its own network of institutions for technical and medical education and for scientific research. It has taken initiatives for policy coordination in a number of areas such as universities, secondary and technical education. Centrally sponsored schemes (e.g., the National Adult Education Programme) are another important form of Central involvement. The University Grants Commission (UGC) exercises considerable influence over university education through the financial assistance it provides. The Centre also funds a number of institutions in the area of culture.

In the sector of *Health*, the Centre is involved in research (through the Indian Council of Medical Research), in operating Centrally-sponsored schemes for the eradication and control of communicable diseases, and in regulating drugs and foodstuffs under the powers it has under List I (entries 18 and 19). Population control and family planning are Concurrent subjects (entry 20A in List III), for the promotion of which large allocations are made in the Centrally-sponsored sector.

4. Originally 'Vocational and technical training of labour' alone was in the Concurrent List. The 42nd Amendment (1976) transferred 'Education, including technical education, medical education and universities' from the State List to the Concurrent List.

5. This too came to the Concurrent List under the 42nd Amendment (1976).

The *Welfare of Labour* is in the Concurrent List (entry 24 in List III) and this enables the Centre to operate schemes for Employees State Insurance (ESI), for Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and for Workmen's Compensation.

Under its planning functions, all major *irrigation* projects are subject to Central clearance with the advice of the Central Water Commission (CWC). Inter-State rivers are a subject reserved to the Centre (entry 56 in List I). Under this provision the Inter-State Water Disputes Act 1956 gives powers to the Centre to effectively decide on the mode of settlement of inter-State river issues.

Electricity is a Concurrent subject (entry 38 in List III). The Centre operates a network of power projects, particularly super-thermal, nuclear and lignite-based. In the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), it has an agency for promoting inter-State coordination through regional grids. The Rural Electricity Corporation (REC) provides funds for rural electrification.

Even a broad-brush description, as above, of the Centre's role in economic development and administration will serve to illustrate not only the many-sidedness of this role but also some of its value and rationale. The Centre's interventions in these functional areas are underpinned by its direct investments, the financial and other institutions it controls, the powers it has to make grants (Art. 282) and loans to the States, its control over States' domestic borrowing (Art. 293) and its exclusive command over foreign exchange and foreign loans. Above all, the planning mechanism, with 'economic and social planning' being in the Concurrent List (entry 20 in List III), supplies the basic nexus for Central advise, consent and involvement in almost all major aspects of economic activity.

Centre-State administrative relations include certain formal consultative structures and informal arrangements to which reference must be made. Article 263 provides for an inter-State Council for dispute settlement and 'for investigating and discussing subjects, in which

some or all of the States, or the Union and one or more of the States, have a common interest, for the purpose of better coordination of policy and action.' Under this provision, councils have been set up for health, for local administration and for inter-State coordination of sales tax. Zonal Councils for contiguous States on a regional basis have been established under the States Reorganisation Act of 1956.

In the sphere of planning, the National Development Council with the Prime Minister as Chairman including all Chief Ministers and Central Ministers provides the highest body for plan policy and review. Annually, there are intensive consultations between the Planning Commission and the States at an official level on resources for the State's Plan and its size and composition. These are followed by a meeting at the level of the Chief Minister and the Minister for Planning. Conferences of Chief Ministers and/or State Ministers with Central Ministers on functional areas such as agricultural prices, agricultural development, irrigation, industry, transport, health, education, social welfare, power development and so on are a normal feature.

Having described the areas of administrative interaction between the Centre and the States, we may proceed to indicate the types of conflicts that have arisen in actual practice and the issues that they throw up. It will be beyond the scope of this note to detail concrete controversies: all that will be possible will be to indicate the broad nature of disaffections that have arisen and persisted on the part of the States.

There has been considerable dissatisfaction related to the subject of the Governor: firstly, that the institution has been thoroughly politicised with the appointment of Governors who are henchmen of the party in power in the Centre. As such, it has been pointed out that they have tended to act as tools in the exercise of partisan politics by the Centre rather than as neutral upholders of the Constitution. Arising

from this, the objectivity of decisions taken by Governors has been questioned in a number of concrete situations in different States, in respect of (a) the selection of Chief Ministers i.e., as leaders of parties for the formation of governments, (b) summoning, prorogation or dissolution of legislatures, (c) reservation of assent to Bills and (d) recommendations for the introduction of President's rule. In this context, the demand has been for laying down guidelines or 'Instruments of Instructions' to Governors which would limit and rationalise the area of discretion to them in the Constitution.⁶

Alternative views have been expressed on all-India services. The West Bengal Government has asked for their abolition and replacement with distinct services for the purposes of the Union and the States.⁷ The Tamilnadu Government favoured recruitment to Federal services on a Statewise basis with provision for mutual exchange of members of the State and Federal services.⁸ The Rajamannar Committee (1971) recommended that all-India services should be organised on a Statewise basis, recruited and controlled exclusively by the State governments. The prerogative of the Rajya Sabha to create new all-India services by two-thirds majority has been viewed as an impairment to State autonomy.⁹ The vesting of

6. Both the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) in its Report on Centre-State Relationships (1969) and the Rajamannar Committee (1971) recommended the issue of formal guidelines.

7. Government of W. Bengal: *A Memorandum on Centre-State Relations 1977*.

8. Government of Tamilnadu: *Tamilnadu Government Views on State Autonomy and the Rajamannar Committee Report 1972*.

9. The Indian Forest Service was constituted under this provision in 1966. Enabling legislation for the constitution of all-India services for Engineering and for Medicine and Public Health enacted in 1963; the Rajya Sabha also passed a resolution in 1966 for the creation of all-India services in Education and Agriculture but enabling legislation could not be enacted due to the dissolution of the Third Lok Sabha. None of these services were actually established due to subsequent opposition by State governments. Provision was made for an all-India judicial service in the 42nd Amendment (1976).

powers in the President, rather than with the State administration, for the removal of the Chairman or a member of the State Public Services Commission has been pointed out as an anomaly that should be set right.¹⁰

The use of the Central Reserve Police (CRP) within the State without prior consultation with, or concurrence from, the State Government has been a major bone of contention. Actual conflict has arisen on more than one occasion on this score (Kerala 1968, West Bengal 1969).

The various powers of the Centre to give directive to States have been questioned as amounting to serious infractions of their autonomy. In particular, Article 365 which enables the taking over of the State administration in cases where Central directives are not complied with has been viewed as an opening for possible arbitrary and malafide intervention by the Centre.

The adequacy as well as the functioning of Centre-State consultative mechanisms have been criticised. States have argued that the Centre's consultations with them have been inadequate and perfunctory and that heed has not often been paid to the viewpoints of the States. Dissatisfaction has been expressed with the functioning of the NDC and the Zonal Councils. There has been a demand that the area for consultation should be formally enlarged and the scope for unilateral decisions eliminated. The creation of an inter-State Council under Art. 263 with wide powers to oversee and decide upon all aspects of Centre-State relations has been urged.¹¹

10. It is interesting that the Tamilnadu Public Service Commission testifying before the Rajamannar Committee felt that the status quo, viz., Article 317 should continue.

11. The ARC (1969) recommended the creation of an Inter-State Council under Article 263 as an experimental measure for two years. It did not detail its scope and suggested that the Council may consist of the Prime Minister as Chairman, the Finance and Home Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok

The vast and varied powers that the Centre exercises in functional areas within the rubric of 'economic and social planning' have been commented upon on several grounds. It has been argued that many of the Central or Centrally-sponsored schemes could be transferred to the States in the interests of both functional decentralisation and State autonomy. Concurrently, greater flexibility has been demanded for States in implementing such schemes. Wider powers to the States have been urged in matters like industrial licensing even if a coordinating role to the Centre might be tenable.¹² In its direct investments, the Centre has been accused of favouring or neglecting individual States on political grounds. It has been argued that financial flows, from the Union budget and from public financial institutions under Central control, have failed to correct regional disparities and adequately to promote the development of backward areas. The role of the Planning Commission vis-a-vis the Finance Commission has attracted much discussion. The main thrust of it has been that plan assistance ought to be based on more settled and equitable principles than what obtains; and that, therefore, they should be subsumed under, or at least be better coordinated with, the transfers of the Finance Commission.

We should also notice the main contextual changes in the debate on Centre-State administrative relations. As on other Centre-State issues, with which they are closely inter-related, this debate has waxed and waned in different periods. The political and economic challenges in the immediate aftermath of free-

Sabha and a representative each from the five Zonal Councils. The Tamilnadu Government following the Rajamannar Committee suggested a Council consisting of all Chief Ministers with the Prime Minister as Chairman.

12. The Rajamannar Committee (1971) recommended that the Centre's licensing powers should be restricted to industries of national importance or of an all-India character or to industries involving a capital of more than one hundred crores of rupees. The W. Bengal Government's suggestion was that States may be given exclusive powers in respect of certain categories of industries but they did not specify which.



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EDITED BY AKOS OSTER, LINA FRUZZETTI, AND STEVE BARNETT

This study is the first comprehensive review of new developments in symbolic, structural, and cultural anthropology applied to a specific area — in this case, India. Using rich ethnographic detail, it looks at the extent to which new models of kinship, caste, and marriage translate into regional and Indian models. The contributors, all distinguished scholars of South Asia, tackle different geographical areas and such diverse topics as hierarchy, forms of address, ritual, household and widowhood. But central to each chapter is a focus on the idea of the person in social relations.

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dom, the fact that Constitution-making itself had been relatively recent, and the continuance of one-party rule in the Centre and States for a long period, not to mention the benign and charismatic leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, were factors in keeping the issues largely quiescent for about two decades following independence. The late 1960s which saw the formation of a number of non-Congress governments provided a natural context for the opening up of the debate. Two important reports viz., that of the Administrative Reforms Commission (1969) and the Rajamannar Committee (1971) set up by the Tamilnadu Government gave it impetus.¹³ The debate receded with the emergence of a more homogeneous configuration of political parties in the Centre and the States in the 1971 elections. The Bangladesh war had its effect in strengthening sentiments for a strong Centre.

The Emergency (1975-77) and the 42nd Amendment that followed represented blows to democracy as well as to States' autonomy. The Janata Government (1977-80) projected itself as being in favour of greater decentralisation and consultation but on many specific Central-State issues, the 44th Amendment to the Constitution (1978), did not provide sufficient redress to the States.¹⁴ However, in the area of fiscal relations, it was in this period that a significantly more liberal devolution of resources occurred to the States under the award of the Seventh

13. Mention may also be made of two National Conventions organised in the early 1970s. The first was a National Convention on Union-State Relationships held in 1970 in New Delhi jointly sponsored by the Indian Law Institute, the Indian Institute of Public Administration and the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies. Its proceedings have been published in S.N. Jain, S.C. Kashyap and N. Srinivasan (eds), *The Union and the States*, National Publishing House, Delhi 1972. The second was a National-Seminar sponsored by the Administrative Staff College of India, the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies and the Osmania University in Hyderabad in 1971. Its proceedings can be found in B.L. Maheshwari (ed.), *Centre-State Relations in the Seventies*, Administrative Staff College of India, 1973.

14. See in this connection the discussion in Amal Ray, S.K. Chatteejee and Vanitha Venkatasubbiah: *Political Development and Constitutional Change*, Vikas, 1982 (pp. 74-83).

Finance Commission.

In the early 1980s, we see not only a renewal of the conditions of the late 1960s but a much deeper distrust of the Centre arising from developments in the last decade. Partisan politics has been evident in the Centre's attitude to the formation or continuance of governments in the States both under the Janata in 1977 and after the restoration of the Congress in 1980. Since 1980, we have had the examples of Haryana, the Assam elections and, more recently, the case of Pondicherry. Hints have been thrown from time to time about moves towards a more unitary or Presidential form of Constitution. State governments, within the Congress-fold itself, have been destabilised many times by a highly centralised intra-party leadership: *atma gauravam* as Andhra Pradesh proved, has become a live issue within the one big unhappy family of the All-India Congress.

Alongside, among major States, non-Congress governments have continued, if not consolidated themselves, in W. Bengal, Tamilnadu and Jammu and Kashmir and another has emerged in Karnataka. A new regional force has successfully stormed the erstwhile Congress bastion of Andhra Pradesh. Four southern Chief Ministers have come together to form a consultative council. A conclave has taken place between several non-Congress Chief Ministers and leaders of opposition parties. Most importantly, serious disturbances have continued for quite some time in Assam and Punjab based on issues of regional identity.

Taking place under these circumstances, the debate is likely to get increasingly politically surcharged on both sides. The defenders of the status quo will raise the cry of danger to national security and unity in any move for greater substantive autonomy to the States.¹⁵

15. In fact, there is already evidence of this in the concluding perorative phrase to the terms of reference to the Sarkaria Commission which refers to the 'founding fathers' of the Constitution having 'so sedulously designed (it) to protect independence and to ensure the unity and integrity of the country.'

External threats have always been with us; and Assam and Punjab will be used to lend credence to the internal threat. There is risk, too, on the other side, that protagonists of greater powers to the States might too closely identify the Union, in its proper constitutional sense, with the ruling party, if not person, wielding power at the moment in the Centre. The confusion of India with Indira occurs unfortunately among her sycophants as well as her critics!

A wise and objective course will have to be charted, in these circumstances, between the devil of central authoritarianism and the deep sea of autarky at the State-level. Firstly, given the size, complexity and interdependence of the economy and the need for rapid, rational and equitable growth, coordinating and facilitating mechanisms of a wide range are needed: such as in the areas of research, standardisation, industrial harmonisation, food administration, backward area development, dispute settlements and regulation and promotion to subserve national priorities. Secondly, in matters such as the public services and public order, administration should be altogether depoliticised. This is the issue and not whether the locus of political abuse should remain in Delhi or in State capitals or how it may be shared between the two. Thirdly, we should not forget that greater inter-State harmony is a *sine qua non* for reducing the Centre's scope for interference and mischief.

To be meaningful, the distribution of administrative power — political and economic — between the Centre and the States will have to be discussed in an overall framework of cooperative federalism that takes into account national goals for social and economic development, canons for fair administration, and the widest possible cooperation between States. To promote such a discussion, like-minded State governments will need to organise detailed thinking on the several issues referred to in this note and come up with concrete alternatives to the present arrangements.

Smaller states

N. S. RAMASWAMY

OUR parliamentary democracy model, with its present structure, is undergoing serious strain. A number of States are asking for more autonomy for faster economic and social development. They feel that the highly centralised structure of decision-making and resource allocation is not conducive to rapid development. At the other end, the Centre has been taking increasing responsibilities every year, becoming more and more powerful and thinking that it is helping development. In fact, with every incremental respon-

sibility undertaken by it, it is becoming less and less powerful to carry out the functions which only the State ought to.

Ideally, we should have a structure of Centre-State relations where there should be a maximum of decentralisation, delegation and autonomy to the States so that each State can develop its own genius without much interference from the Central Government. At the same time, the Centre should be very powerful so that a plural society

such as ours does not disintegrate under pressure from regional passions and loyalties. In between, there are a number of items which are inter-State in character, which only the Centre should handle. Further, there are issues such as correction of regional imbalances, where again the Centre has to play a predominant role. In this context a review of Centre-State relations is urgently called for.

The Assam and Punjab agitations, the formation of the Council of Southern Chief Ministers, the demand for more autonomy by some of the States, the concealed confrontation with the Centre by non-Congress(I) governments, the growing menace of parochialism and linguism, the increasing popularity of regional parties with no national perspectives or considerations, the erosion of national consciousness and a host of other unfortunate developments affecting our national consciousness, are causing grave concern to informed citizens. Many of them are asking for a stronger Centre, while regional parties are pressing for stronger States. The only redeeming feature is that it has now been conceded by the top leadership that the problems are serious, which is evident from the pronouncement of all our leaders as also from the recent constitution of the Sarkaria Commission.

The President and the Prime Minister are stressing every day that national unity is the supreme need of the hour. Naturally all are alarmed that phrases and pronouncements, which would have been normally treated as anti-national, are being freely used by influential segments of our society in newspapers and on platforms. For instance, expressions such as the break-up of India, secession, partition, separatism, etc., can be seen in slogans and articles. Emotional and provocative appeals to defy the Centre are being made by nonchalant leaders for partisan political ends. It is tragic that all these persons, seeking their self-interest in the political and economic arena, do not realise the damage that such campaigns cause to the unity of our country.

Who is responsible for this sad state of affairs? Is it that the post-independent generation of leaders and professionals in the various fields are less nationalistic and patriotic. I don't think so. I submit that our political system and economic models are directly responsible for the trends leading us surely, though slowly, to disaster, possibly in this century itself.

While the situation is not yet critical enough for panic and despair, there is an urgent need for a review of our system — political, economic and social. Even within the existing framework, there is a possibility for preserving our political unity and for fostering faster development. But, sitting with the illusion that we can solve the problems as we go along, retaining the basic structure, may end in an irretrievable situation.

Our fundamental problem has arisen from the fact that we adopted the parliamentary democracy model of the British in toto. This would have perhaps worked out well if we were a mono-culture like Britain.

But we are a pluralistic society divided amongst ourselves along caste, religion, ethnic group, language, food and dress habits, and a hundred other divisive factors. The electoral system where the leaders seek votes invoking sentiments and affiliations based on caste, community and language loyalties — divides our peoples into sub-sets. Ideology, professionalism, national or regional interests, etc., are ignored. Our party bosses know the caste configuration and conflicts on their fingertips, which are manipulated with gay abandon to somehow get elected. We are more caste and communal minded today than at the time of independence.

Even these divisive factors would not have aggravated the situation so much, but for the massive State intervention in economic development with the government machinery acting as entrepreneur, manager and controller. This is unlike in Britain where the State is much less involved directly in economic and social development as in India.

Again, the problem is not so much State intervention *per se*, which is a must for a developing society with regional and class imbalances. The danger lies in the practice of the Centre allocating enormous resources to the States for development purposes. In our democratic model where decisions are taken by politicians with an eye on their sectarian followers and interests, partisan politics cannot be avoided in resource allocation.

Even this worked well when all the States and the Centre were ruled by the Congress Party. During those good old days, the Congress Working Committee took most of the major policy decisions and all other forums — Cabinet, Planning Commission and National Development Council — simply endorsed the same. Leaders — with national following and with roots in the nationalist movement for independence — stood above parochial considerations. They have now been replaced by the modern politician whose survival depends on local votes for which he has to pamper the electorate, or he has to tag on to charismatic leaders, such as Indira Gandhi, MGR, NTR and so on.

Now different political parties are in power in some of the States. Such central allocation of resources by Central ministers is contested by the States where the leaders come from different political parties. Even assuming that the Centre acts rationally for bringing in equity, correcting regional imbalances, development of backward regions and people and so on, the States look at these from a political point of view. The Centre is under constant attack and is portrayed as the partisan villain. Central leaders also have to nurse their constituencies. Irrational allocations are legitimised through a series of bureaucratic exercises on the files.

Since the size of the States is unequal, the Central leadership has to be sensitive to the pressures of larger States and/or the belligerent ones who are capable of confronting and articulating, besides high pressure lobbying. States compete for

Central resources and establishment of public enterprises in their States and districts. The aggrieved and deprived give a linguistic connotation in order to brow-beat the decision-maker, and to pacify his followers. Giving a certain resource to one State would invariably amount to denying another. The consequent clamour and rivalries rise to tribal levels, and States behave as if they were independent nations.

Linguistic minorities are treated like aliens. It is a great tragedy that, in the name of national integration, 80% of jobs are reserved for local people. This principle is further misused to prevent applicants from other States getting jobs in Central enterprises and organisations. All States are trying to give primary importance to their languages. They also insist that other language groups should learn their language as a condition to live in the State. The very concept of a single nation, which assumes and requires maximum mobility, is being ignored.

Language is an emotional issue. Masses can be swayed to hate another language group; merely to show their love for their own language. Cementing factors such as political ideology, religious affiliations, national spirit and professionalism are unable to suppress linguistic chauvinism and divisive forces.

Language has a strong bond which normally cuts across all other diverse and divisive factors. A Kerala Christian going to Bengal seeks the companionship of a Keralite, and does not bother about religion. A Bengalee Brahmin coming to the South searches for a Bengalee, irrespective of any other affiliation — religion or caste. Thanks to English, communication exists between language groups. Hindi is yet to become the link language in order to play such a cementing role.

Language is a great divider of the people. Advanced nations of Europe and tribals all over the world are based on language. With enormous resources and area but with a small population, Canadians are dividing themselves into the English and French speaking. Pakistan broke on

language. Sri Lanka is suffering the same agony. Each State is fanning local sentiment, disregarding the danger that this might slowly erode the unity of the nation.

In order to preserve the unity and development of the nation and with an endless list of objectives—all well meaning and justifiable—the Centre has been merely taking on increasing responsibilities every year. With every such addition, its capacity to carry out the vital functions of a federal government is being continuously reduced. Managerial resources have a limit even in the best run organisations in the world. Governing such a large country like India, with its innumerable problems, from a central point—and that too with a highly (and absurdly) centralised system of decision making is not only foolish but also dangerous.

When the Central Government had only one-tenth of the present responsibility and one-hundredth of the problems, we had stalwarts in the Central cabinet who would take independent decisions. Today everything has to be referred to the P.M.—party matters as well—from the trivial to the profound. It is to the P.M.'s credit that she is able to attend to all these. There is no parallel elsewhere in history—past and contemporary—when so much, and so many, depend on one individual.

We can find reasonable solutions to these vexed problems if we were to accept decentralization at all levels and stages—the essence of management of economic development—from the Centre to the States, from the State secretariat to districts, and so on—down the line to sub-taluk/sub-blocks and Panchayats. The same exercise has to be done for the railways, P & T and other utilities and services.

Such a delegation of responsibility would enable the Centre to concentrate on objectives and tasks which are vital to the nation's unity and integrity, and which should be handled only by the Centre. Such a division of responsibility between the Centre and the States would straightforwardly strengthen the Centre. The States would not be able to

blame the Centre for every failure, as they do now. Dependence on the Centre would be reduced. States describe themselves as glorified municipalities, begging the Centre for everything; decentralisation would increase their self-reliance.

Ironically, it is precisely the States which benefitted by the location of Central public enterprises, who are complaining more. The correction of regional imbalances demands the location of public enterprises, which cannot be justified in terms of rate of return, quick execution etc. 'We already have the infrastructure and skill so give it to us' principle, if followed, would end up with a few regions developing fast, leaving others backward for ever. The Centre is seen as 'partisan' in every such decision. Any number of irresponsible decisions have been taken to pamper one's own region for votes.

All these will end if States are given more responsibility for raising revenue for development and executing projects as per their choice and priorities. The Centre can keep aloof and cease to be the villain of the piece. Also, the Centre need not groan under gigantic development responsibilities, and be compelled, as now, to neglect the vital functions of a central government.

Even after delegating 'specific State' development functions, the Centre would still have numerous ones left over. Everything concerning inter-State involvement and linkage, everything outside the scope of the States, the natural monopolies of a federal government, etc., would still remain with the Centre. These by themselves would be too huge and frightening for any government.

Handing over part of the development responsibility (State specific projects of all kinds) to the States would necessitate giving powers to them for taxation and raising resources (but States are reluctant to tax for fear of losing votes in the rural areas). The Centre is keeping taxation powers (and then allocating to States) because this is the one stick with which it can discipline

the States If most financial powers are given to the States, they may not listen to the Centre's sage advice on matters of national significance. Also, there may be discrimination, misuse and intimidation of entrepreneurs and companies operating in the States. Already, some States threaten companies if they do not favour local interests or if they plan expansion of units in other States.

taka A and not between Maharashtrians and Kannadigas as now. With metropolitan cities removed, the media power would be less partisan. It is in the metropolitan cities that we have large minorities. Metropolitan cities have been developed by the whole nation. Now they are being possessed by a single language group within which they are located. In the proposed set-up, they would be the property of all who live there.

The solution to the problem is to divide India into a number of small provinces. To begin with, all the metropolitan cities—Delhi, Bombay Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore Mysore, Cochin-Alwaye, Lucknow-Kanpur, Poona-Pimpri etc.—should be separated as City Provinces—about ten of them. The rest of India should be divided into 60 unilingual provinces—say, Kerala into two; Karnataka into three; Tamil Nadu into four; Andhra into 5; Maharashtra into 6; U.P. into 8; Gujarat into 3; Bengal into four; M.P. into five and so on. The population should be around 10 to 15 million, as in the case of Punjab and Haryana. This will be acceptable to all since it does not go against the linguistic principle of our uni-linguism and this requires no constitutional amendment.

Small provinces become easily manageable. Powers for taxation and development can be delegated to these provinces. Small provinces will not confront the Centre. The Centre can concentrate on inter-provincial projects and problems. If any province disobeys the Centre, it can be easily disciplined. Political processes will reach the people, unlike now where a Chief Minister of a large State cannot tour all the districts once in five years. Equal size will bring in equality amongst them vis-a-vis the Centre. Backward provinces can be given special treatment which is not possible now since the forward regions of a State neglect the backward regions. All inter-provincial disputes would not take on a linguistic character, as they do now. Language chauvinism would diminish.

The Belgaum dispute would be between Maharashtra E and Karna-

Central resource allocation for one province would not only attract the competition from other language provinces, but also the same language province—thus transcending language. The ethnic identity and cultural affinity would be strengthened and minorities better treated. Law and order would become easier. The problem of the Finance Commission and of the Planning Commission would become much less complex. More towns would develop as district headquarters and provincial capitals. Migration to the metro-cities would diminish.

This would be acceptable to the political processes since there will be more political decentralisation, and therefore, opportunities. Relationship with the Centre would be on an equal footing. More leaders would rise from the provinces. The present predominance of the Hindi belt in the political process in the Centre would diminish. Each province would feel a sense of ethnic and cultural affiliation without hatred for other provinces. The Centre would become a legitimate Centre not usurping the powers of the States.

All inter-provincial projects including river valley development, national grids of all kinds, natural monopolies, etc., would function more effectively. Provinces would become fully responsible for implementation. The Planning Commission would not be blamed for poor implementation. (Strangely, it is not concerned with implementation). The provinces would get genuine power to choose the projects of their liking, using their own resources. Waste would be reduced.

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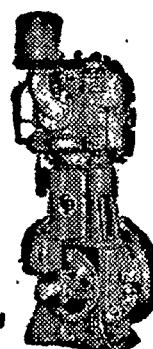
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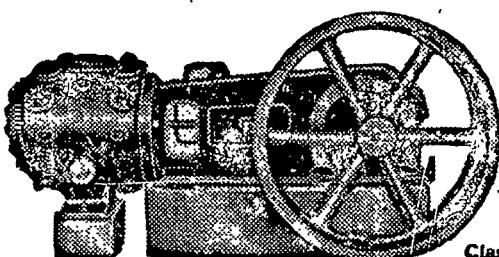
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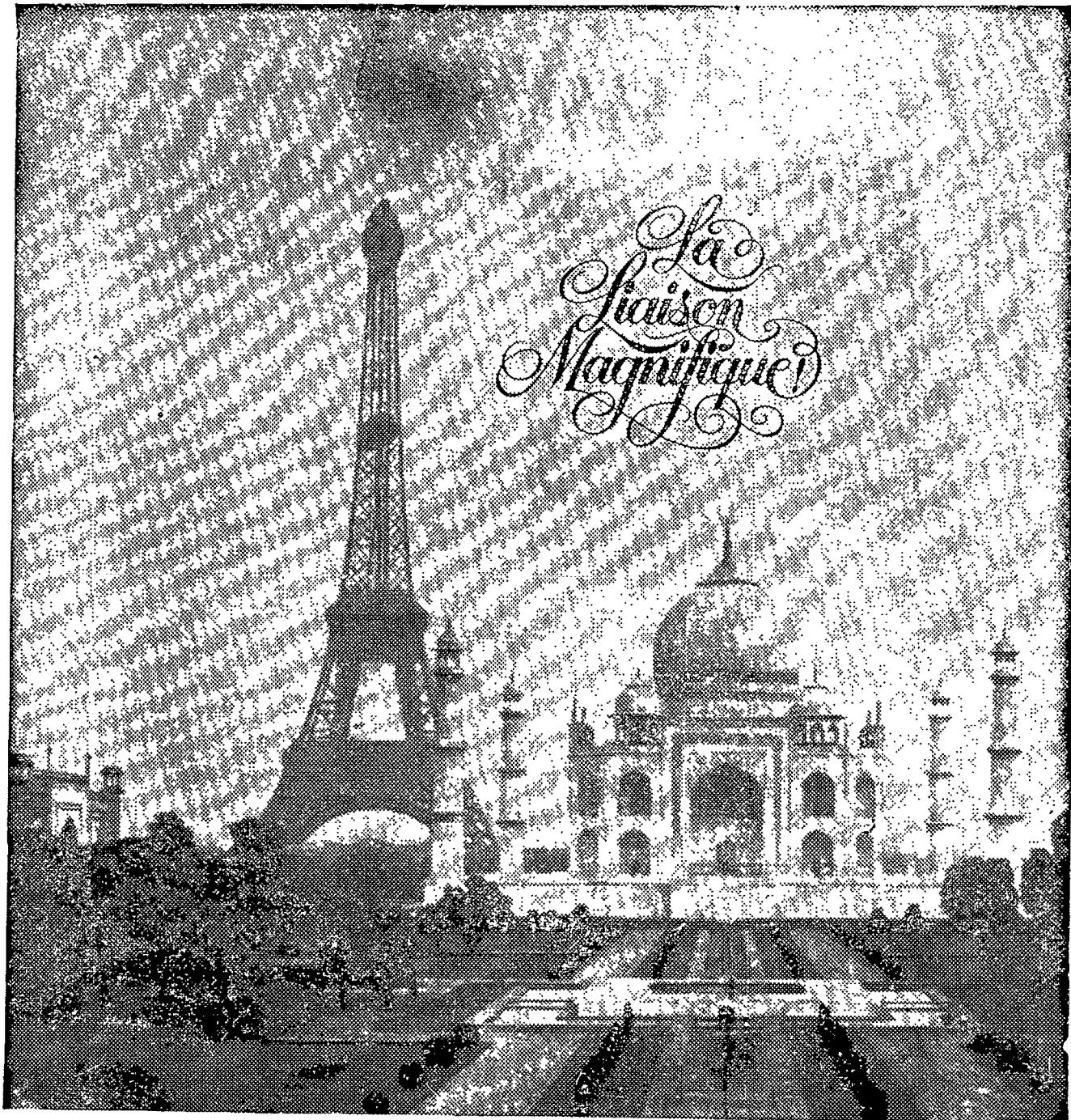
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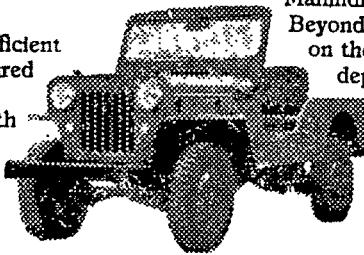


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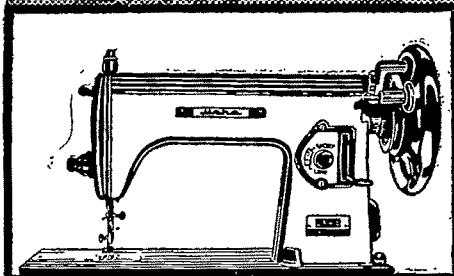
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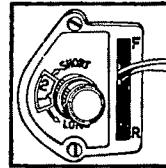
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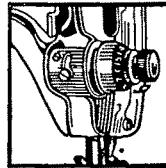
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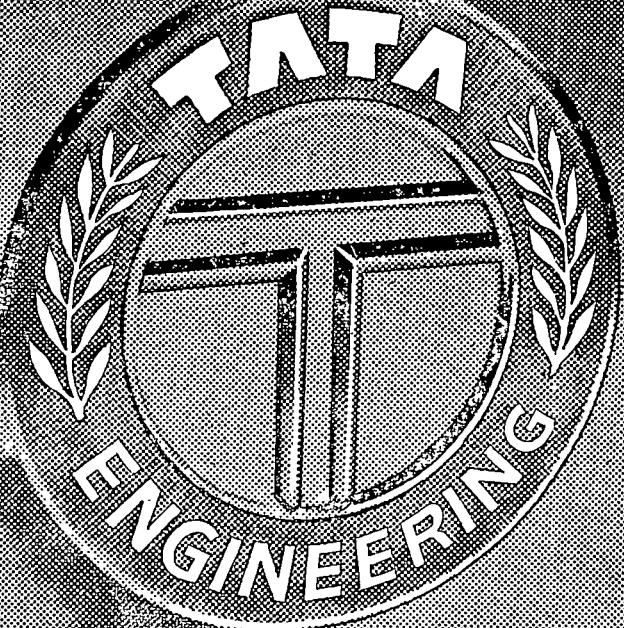
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SPEECH
by
SHRI Y.R. GHORPADE
Chairman

At the Twenty-ninth
Annual General Meeting
held on 29th September.

1983

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend to you all a very cordial welcome to the twenty-ninth Annual General Meeting of the Company.

2. During the year ending 31st March 1983 the turnover of the Company dropped to Rs. 15 crores as compared to a record turnover of Rs. 24 crores in the previous year. The profitability of the Company also went down from a profit of Rs. 1.46 crores during 1981-82 (after providing depreciation of Rs. 1.19 crores and interest of Rs. 1.20 crores) to a loss of Rs. 4.23 crores (after providing depreciation of Rs. 1.01 crores and interest of Rs. 1.60 crores). This deterioration of nearly Rs. 9 crores in the turnover and Rs. 5.7 crores in the profitability of the Company was largely due to one single factor, namely, the sharp fall in our pig iron production and the shutting down of the pig iron furnace for the most part of the year 1982-83, as a result of the drastic effect that cheap pig iron imports had on our pig iron sales, which suddenly dropped, from April 1982, to about 500 to 700 tonnes per month from an average monthly sale of about 3000 tonnes during the previous year.

3. It may be recalled that the import of pig iron was banned upto March 1981. As a result of the new policy of liberalised imports in the wake of the IMF loan, the Government decided to put pig iron on the Open General Licence from April 1981 and abolish the import duty of 55% on pig iron imports from November 1981. This enabled countries like China and Pakistan to dump cheap pig iron into India to the great detriment of electric pig iron producers like Sandur Manganese & Iron Ores Limited, who have been producing and supplying low phosphorus pig iron of the highest quality to specialised foundries for the past so many years. At the same time, the power rate applicable to the Company was suddenly increased from 15 paise per unit to 27 paise per unit, in total disregard of our long term agreement with the Karnataka Electricity Board. This increased our monthly power bill from Rs. 43 lakhs to Rs. 78 lakhs, and considerably increased the gap between the cost at which electric pig iron

could be produced by us and the price of blast furnace pig iron and cheap imports. From September 1981 the imports of pig iron were canalised through the Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), who decided to import 5 lakh tonnes of pig iron during 1982-83, to supplement the anticipated supply of about 15 lakh tonnes of blast furnace pig iron by the Hindustan Steel Limited (HSL) to the foundries against their estimated total demand of about 20 lakh tonnes. We repeatedly represented to the Government that if they intend to continue this policy of pig iron imports irrespective of its ruinous effect on indigenous units of long standing like ours, then the least they could do to safeguard internal production and employment was to purchase our entire pig iron production on an agreed price basis to be determined by an organisation like the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices, for supply to foundries along with all other pig iron. We also pointed out that if the pig iron is sold to the foundries at an average price including our pig iron, which was a small portion of the total requirement, the effect on the sale price to the foundries would be very marginal. In principle it was not right to allow imports of pig iron without taking into account the full production capacity within the country, in units such as Visweswaraiah Iron & Steel, Maharashtra Electrosmelt, Kalinga Iron and Sandur Manganese & Iron Ores. These public and private sector units have a capacity of 3 lakh tonnes which, along with 15 lakh tonnes HSL was to supply, amounted to a total of 18 lakh tonnes, while the quantity of pig iron actually consumed by the foundries during 1982-83 was less than 16 lakh tonnes. However, in 1982-83 HSL produced only 11 lakh tonnes of foundry grade pig iron and imported more than 4 lakh tonnes without making any distinction between low phosphorus and high phosphorus pig iron. This also means that the actual consumption of the foundries in 1982-83 would have been fully met even without any imports if only HSL had made available 15 lakh tonnes of pig iron as contemplated with another 1 lakh tonne which was to come from secondary producers like our Company. As a matter of fact the entire demand for low phosphorus pig iron from specialised foundries was being met by our Company. Under these circumstances, imports of pig iron and especially low phosphorus pig iron are totally uncalled for, and those who are incharge of our economic policies and their proper implementation should examine, in national interest, the consequences of the different items of import as a result of the IMF loan, whose declared intention is to strengthen indigenous production and the balance of payments and not to weaken them. A developing economy cannot suddenly be expected to become a comparatively low-cost economy by permitting indiscriminate imports which can only serve the interest of the developed economies and do considerable damage to our own short term and long term interests.

4. The prospects for manganese ore exports continued to be bleak because of hardly any improvement in the world steel recession, and the technological developments to reduce the percentage use of manganese in steel production, which has come down from about 18 Kgs per tonne to less than 10 Kgs per tonne. Even the Japanese steel production in 1982 was only 99 million tonnes. It may be recalled that in the early seventies, the Japanese steel production was estimated to reach 140 million tonnes by 1975. This clearly indicates the significant slowdown in the projected increases

in the production and demand for steel and their consequential effect on manganese ore. Our Company which exported, on an average, 2.7 lakh tonnes of manganese ore per year during the period 1972 to 1974, has to now be content with less than 50,000 tonnes of exports to Japan, though the item is canalised through the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Ltd. (MMTC) who are fully aware of the world situation and the dependence of our large labour force on manganese ore production and exports. The large manganese ore units in South Africa have been able to eat into our markets in Japan as a result of the various advantages they enjoy, including modern ports which can handle large vessels of 100,000 tonnes bringing down the sea freight, and an aggressive sales policy. 80,000 tonnes of 38-40% Mn ore, which Japan still buys every year and which used to be almost wholly supplied by our Company in the early seventies, is now largely supplied by South Africa, MMTC being able to sell only about 10,000 to 20,000 tonnes of our 38-40% Mn ore to Japan. The recent fall in the manganese ore prices by about \$ 5 has further seriously affected the situation. In order to at least retain our share in the export market, we have been urging the Government to take an overall view of manganese ore exports, especially exports of low grade manganese ore such as ours and the employment it generates, and not to weaken our competitive position by increases in railway freight and port charges and non-abolition of the export duty which has lost all its logic in the present context. We have also urged that the MMTC should charge a nominal commission of 1% for its services as a canalising agency and not 5 to 7% as it is doing at present. In view of the sizeable reserves of low grade manganese ore and its employment potential, the Government should consider other fiscal incentives to ensure that our manganese ore does not suffer any inherent disadvantage in the world market.

5. In order to adjust to this difficult situation in the best possible manner, the Company has diversified its production pattern in a major way by commencing production of ferromanganese from July 1983, and deciding to produce only such quantities of low phosphorus pig iron that could still be sold at a workable price in the internal market. This is also expected to improve the economic viability of our manganese ore mines which will be supplying a major portion of our manganese ore requirements for the production of ferromanganese. Our manganese ores, though very low in phosphorus (P) are high in iron (Fe) and will have to be blended to some extent with ores which are high in manganese (Mn) and low in iron content. The Company has an industrial licence for the production of 36,000 tonnes of various ferroalloys including ferromanganese and for 24,000 tonnes of ferrosilicon. The actual production of ferromanganese will depend on what we are able to sell to SAIL and in the internal market. To begin with, we expect to produce about 17,000 tonnes of ferromanganese in the current fiscal year ending 31st March 1984 and larger quantities in subsequent years. SAIL, at present, is buying their required quantities of both ferromanganese and ferrosilicon from various indigenous producers as a result of a conscious policy not to import these items though they may be available cheaper abroad. It is the same logic that we want Government and SAIL to apply to electric pig iron as well, which is also produced in an electric furnace at prices which mainly depend upon the electricity rate and coke charges over which we have no control. In 1983-84 SAIL is expected to buy 1,27,000 tonnes from the various indigenous units who expect to sell another 40,000 tonnes in the internal market amounting to 1.7 lakh tonnes though their total capacity is higher. Similarly SAIL is expected to buy 19,000 tonnes of ferrosilicon from the indigenous ferrosilicon producing units who expect to sell another 35,000 tonnes in the internal market making a total of 54,000 tonnes, though in this case also their total installed capacity is higher. Therefore, it is urged that the Government should seriously consider a suitable export incentive scheme to enable the ferroalloy producers to work their furnaces to fuller capacity and export at least some quantities of ferromanganese and

ferrosilicon at workable prices. The Planning Commission and the other policy making authorities and the State Electricity Boards should take into account the technical and economic imperatives of the situation and the requirements of the various power-intensive units. There should be a reasonable ceiling on the power cut that is made applicable to such industries. It is needless to emphasise that wide fluctuations in power supply and power cuts is both technically and economically ruinous to power-intensive industries which are serving a priority need in the country.

6. It is against this background that the performance of the Company in 1982-83, and its prospects for 1983-84 and subsequent years, will have to be viewed. Much will also depend on the power situation in the State which is wholly hydro-electric at present and hence dependent on the vagaries of the monsoon. The average power cut for our industry worsened to 34% in 1982-83 as compared to 24% in 1981-82. However, the power situation in the State is expected to improve with increased generation from the Kalinadi project and the Raichur Thermal Power Station which is under construction. The Company has three electric furnaces of which one is being used for the production of ferromanganese and one for ferrosilicon and, if there is still any balance power available, the third furnace can be used to produce either ferromanganese, ferrosilicon or pig iron, depending on the demand situation.

7. The pattern of manganese ore production at our mines is being suitably restructured to meet the specific requirements of our Metal and Ferroalloys Plant near Hospet for the production of ferromanganese and for such exports as are still possible to Japan and Eastern Europe. This strategy of using our own manganese ore to the extent possible for ferromanganese production does help the Company considerably by avoiding total dependence on the high grade manganese ores whose price and cost of transportation from the Madhya Pradesh region is quite high.

8. Due to reasons already stated, the production and sales of pig iron went down from 41,000 tonnes and 35,000 tonnes respectively during 1981-82 to 9000 tonnes and 8,500 tonnes respectively during 1982-83. As regards ferrosilicon, the production in 1982-83 was 9,000 tonnes as compared to 14,000 tonnes in 1981-82, mainly because we had adequate stocks of ferrosilicon during the first half of the year and the power cut went up sharply in the second half, and it was as high as 69% in the last quarter. However, the sales of about 12,000 tonnes of ferrosilicon in 1982-83 was more or less comparable with the sales in 1981-82. The Company is also actively working on the production of high purity ferrosilicon which is required by the Rourkela Steel Plant for their Cold Rolled Grain Oriented Silicon Steel Project. We will have to think of producing low and medium carbon ferromanganese to improve profitability. It seems desirable for the Company to also diversify into electronics and other products to broaden its base.

9. By all these steps the Company will be able to recover from the shock of pig iron imports. While 1982-83 has been a bad year for reasons beyond our control, in the year 1983-84 this downward trend will be checked and the foundations laid for fuller recovery in 1984-85. The steel recession cannot become any worse and is likely to show distinct signs of improvement in 1984-85 by which time the power situation is also expected to improve. But the State Government and the Electricity Board will have to honour their commitments and ensure that the power rate charged is not beyond the industry's capacity to pay.

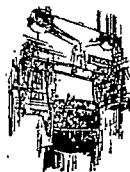
10. I wish to express my deep appreciation of the good work put in by all the employees of the Company. I am grateful to all my colleagues on the Board and the Financial Institutions for their valuable guidance and support.

Thank you,

Y. R. GHORPADE

Yeshwantnagar,
29th September, 1983.

Note: This does not purport to be the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting of the Company.

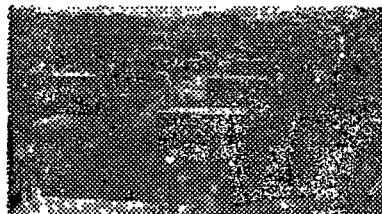


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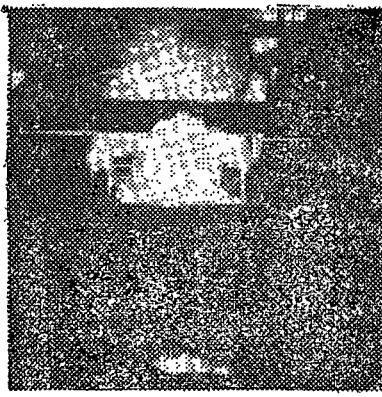
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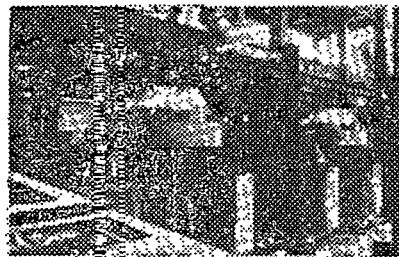
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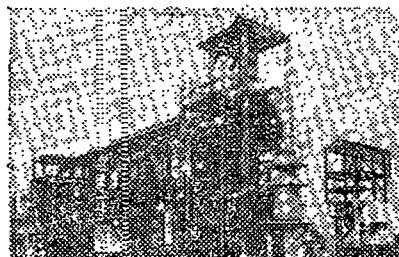
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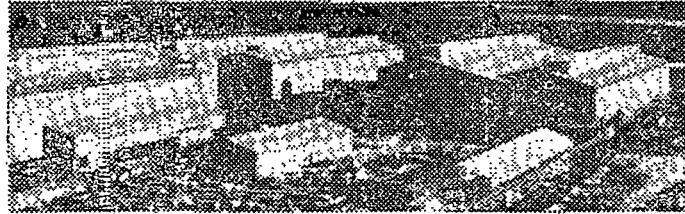
Alloy Steels Plant, Durgapur : Tapping of liquid steel from the 50-ton arc furnace (Stage I Expansion)



TISCO modernisation : 130-ton LD converters under erection



Sponge iron plant, Kothagudem : Direct reduction unit with waste gas cleaning facility



Superalloys Plant (Midhani), Hyderabad : Plant general view

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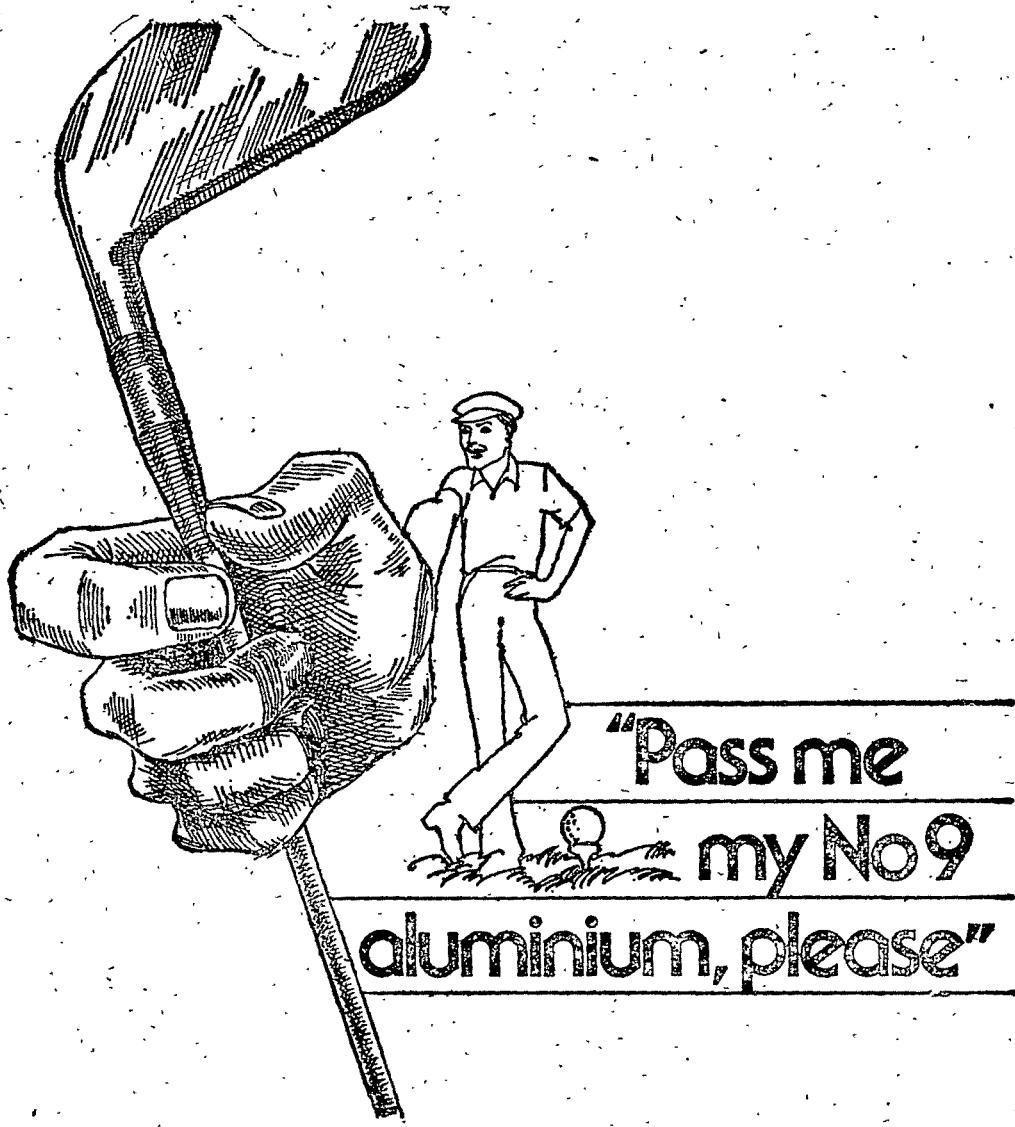
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The problem

THERE is a new ferment in Muslim countries and populations that stretch all the way from Morocco on the Atlantic to the Philippines in the Pacific. Its manifestations are varied. They include the doings of a bizarre figure like Qadhafi, the revolution led by the Shi'i clerics in Iran, the Zia regime's declared objective of establishing an Islamic order in Pakistan, the creation of the Organization of Islamic Conference and of other international institutions, on the one hand and, on the other, the growth of orthodox and neo-orthodox movements working to resurrect/preserve the pristine purity of Islamic precepts and practices and to promote *Dawah* activities. The latter undertaken both to win new adherents to the faith and to guide those already in its fold towards becoming more committed and better Muslims.

The underlying objectives, motives and approaches of those involved in these phenomena are, no doubt, as varied as the phenomena themselves. And yet they all index the fact of Muslims 'in widely dispersed areas and in entirely different circumstances' getting 'increasingly engaged for Islam'. What this development portends for the future of Muslim lands and populations, for other countries and peoples and indeed for Islam itself are questions that require careful and systematic consideration.

The answers to these questions will, no doubt, vary with the values, vantage points and the theoretical perspectives of the observers. This is not only inevitable but also necessary for, complex social phenomena do not lend themselves to easy explanations, primarily because both the imponderables and the identifiable factors are often many. There is no sure way of knowing how they will interact at various points in time nor of determining what their individual weights will be in shaping the direction and pattern of events and developments of the kind we are concerned with here.

The need, therefore, is to explore what is happening in Muslim countries and in the world of Islam systematically and from different perspectives and vantage points. This issue of SEMINAR seeks to do so by highlighting some aspects of the stirrings, variously referred to as revival, resurgence, assertion, fundamentalism, etc., in Muslim lands and communities. The approach adopted is to look both at what is happening in the Muslim world from the outside, as it were, and to listen to the voices of the insiders so as to get some idea of the values and concerns that inform the debate in the world of Islam itself. This is no more than a small beginning, for the task is enormous and will require efforts by many and, perhaps, over a long period of time.

Myth of resurgence

SYED BARAKAT AHMAD

IF we are to understand anything about what is happening in the Muslim world today, there are several essential points which must be fully grasped. The first question to be asked is 'What is Islam?' The word Islam is used with at least three different meanings and a lot of confusion can arise from the failure to distinguish between them. 'In the first place', as Bernard Lewis puts it, 'Islam means the religion taught by the Prophet Muhammad and embodied in the Muslim revelation known as the *Qur'an*. In the second place, Islam is the subsequent development of this religion through the work of the great Muslim jurists and theologians. In this sense it includes the mighty structure of the *Shari'a*, the holy law of Islam, and the great corpus of Islamic dogmatic theology. In the third meaning, Islam is the counterpart not of Christianity but rather of Christianity (or Hinduism). In this sense

Islam means not what Muslims believed or were expected to believe but what they actually did — in other words Islamic civilization as known to us in history.¹

The second impediment in understanding Islam is the terminology which has been given currency by the Orientalists and has been accepted by the so-called Muslim scholars who do not know the exact connotation of the original terms. Terms such as 'orthodoxy', 'fundamentalism', 'traditionalism' and 'rationalism' are alien to Islam. Oral transmission of beliefs and customs from the past to the present is the basis for many traditions which provide much of the continuity in western religions. Both in Judaism and Christianity, tradition refers to those ordinances of the oral law for which no proof

1. Bernard Lewis, *Race and Colour in Islam* (New York, 1971), pp. 5-6.

can be adduced from the Bible, but which are regarded as authoritative. This concept of traditionalism is totally foreign to Islam.

The 1967 Confession of Faith for the (American) United Presbyterians says:

'The Scriptures, given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are nevertheless the words of men, conditioned by the language, thought forms, and literary fashions of the places and times at which they were written. They reflect views of life, history, and the cosmos which are then current. The church, therefore, has an obligation to approach the Scriptures with literary and historical understanding.'²

The *Qur'an*, on the other hand, is the authentic word of Allah, outlining the general principles of conduct, man's relation with his Creator, with his fellow-beings and the world. It has an in-built process of rational understanding. It invites its readers to think, to reflect and to meditate. There is no Muslim in the world who can question the authenticity of the *Qur'an* as the word of Allah, as the Christian 'Confession of Faith' does; and yet remain a Muslim. All Muslims are fundamentalists. It is therefore nonsense to classify Muslims as fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists.

Orthodoxy is another term which is meaningless within the Islamic context. The differentiation of western and Orthodox Christianity into two separate societies can be traced in the schism of their common chrysalis, the Catholic Church, into two bodies, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. The Pope is the head of the Roman Catholic Church while the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul) is the head of the Orthodox Church. How do we distinguish between an orthodox and non-orthodox Muslim?

The ignorance of Muslim 'geography' is another problem. The iden-

2. *The Book of Confessions*, The General Assembly (United Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, 1967), p. 929.

tification of the Arabs with Islam is historically correct but Arabs are not the only Muslims. In fact they are far out-numbered by the non-Arabs. There are roughly 750 million Muslims in the world, (all figures are approximations based on UN information valid as of 15 May, 1981). The Arabic speaking Muslims are not more than 150 million. Out of the remaining 600 million Muslims more than 400 million Muslims live in Indonesia (190), Bangladesh (85), Pakistan (80), India (75). The remaining 200 million Muslims live in Turkey, Nigeria, Iran, China, the Soviet Union, Afghanistan and other African, European, American and South Asian countries.

No study of the so-called Islamic upsurge will be complete without taking the above points into consideration. But before we try to understand this upsurge one might ask, 'Is there an upsurge?' Is it a new phenomenon? Bad times have visited the Muslims before and Muslim thinkers, scholars, divines and soldiers have always stood up to save the *ummah* (the Muslim community) either from stagnation, invasion or internal decay. Crusaders ravaged the world of Islam from 1096 to 1204. The Mongols sacked Baghdad in 1258. In 1492 Arabs were expelled from Spain after 700 years of enlightened rule. In 1739 Nadir Shah looted Delhi, in 1857 the Mughals lost their nominal kingdom of Delhi, and finally in 1918 the Ottoman empire disintegrated and vanished.

All these disasters provided opportunities for renewal and restoration. Muslim civilization never lost its resiliency and verve. The Prophet said, 'Allah will send to this community, at the head of every hundred years, one who will renew for it its religion.' There was no period of decline when a *mujaddid* (renewer) was not providentially sent to arrest decay and pull back the community to a closer contact with the principles of the *Qur'an* and the teachings of the Prophet.

While the Crusaders were on the rampage, Imam Ghazali (1058-1111) the *mujaddid* of the 5th century of

Islam was proclaiming that 'philosophical theory cannot form the basis of religious thought'. By revelation only can the primary essentials of truth be attained. Philosophy itself is no equal or rival of revelation.³ While the mystic-philosopher Ghazali was renewing the faith, Salah al Din was destroying the Crusaders at Hattin (1187).

After the fall of Baghdad (1258) there arose the great Hanbalite *mujaddid*, Imam ibn-Taymiyah who claimed *Kashf* (apocalypse) for himself, and deliverances of *Kashf* were brought to the level of a sound intellectual process. While his contemporaries attempted to use force in suppressing his doctrine, it lived on nevertheless and four hundred years later gave an impetus to the eighteenth century puritanical movement of Ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-1787).

The *mujaddid* of the 12th century *Hijrah* Shah Waliullah (1703-1763) was born at a time when the Muslim emperors of Delhi, still the heirs of a great, though dying, tradition had become puppets or prisoners and Delhi lay prostrate after Nadir Shah's departure. It was at this period that Shah Walliullah took the revolutionary step of translating the *Qur'an* into Persian, the then literary language of Indian Muslims and thus enabled the largest number of people to read and understand the *Qur'an*. Shah Walliullah's sons, Shah Abdul Qadir and Shah Rafiuddin, went a step further and translated the *Qur'an* into Urdu.

The education of the indigenous Muslims of India, which was sadly neglected under the Mughals, had now begun. In the twilight of the Mughal empire the Muslims of India who had been so far ignored by the Khurasani, Turani, Rajput and high cast Hindu elite of the Mughal court learnt the word of Allah in their own language and comprehended the real import of their faith.

Sayyid Ahmed Shahid (1786-1831), the *Mujaddid* of the 13th

3. De Lacy O'Leary, *Arabic Thought and its Place in History* (London, 1954), p. 220.

century *Hijrah* continued the process of renewal and the effect of his teaching was tremendous. It meant a courageous and stimulating reaffirmation of faith when neither Muslim life nor honour was safe.

Towards the end of the 13th century *Hijrah* Africa was experiencing the same process of Islamic renewal which Sayyid Ahmad Shahid had initiated in India. The Islamic movement launched by Usman Dan Fodio between 1804-1810 swept over all Hausaland and by 1863 Al-Hajj Umar possessed an empire reaching from Senegal to Timbuctu. While Umar was killed in a battle in 1864, Muhammad Ahmad of Sudan raised the battle cry against the British.

Robert W. July's observations on this revolt are significant. He said that this revolution 'was a manifestation of the broad wave of spiritual unrest which swept the Muslim world during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and resulted in such movements as the puritan, revivalist Wahabiyya in Arabia and the *jihad* of the West African Sudan ...they also subscribed to the doctrine of a Second Coming. Though such a belief varied throughout the Muslim world, in the Sudan it took the form of Mahdism whereby in the last hours of the world, a Mahdi or God-guided one would come to confirm the faith and proclaim justice. He would then fall before the Dajjal or Anti-Christ who in turn would be destroyed by Christ the Prophet as the world ended in triumph of the true faith.'⁴

It is important to note that there has always been a strong messianic tradition in Islam. According to a Prophetic tradition (*hadith*), 'He who does not believe in the Mahdi is an unbeliever, and he who does not believe in the anti-Christ

4. Robert W. July, *A History of the African People* (New York, 1970), pp. 225-6.

5. Shawq-i-bazm-i-Ahmād-wa-dhowg-i-Shahadat hai mujhe Jald Momin lay pabunch is Mahdi-i-dauran talak quoted by Abul Khair Kashfi, *Urdu Sha'iri ka Syasi aur tarikhī pis manzar*, 1707-1857 (Karachi, 1977), p. 263.

is a liar.' The authority of this tradition is Malik b. Anas. The well known Urdu poet Momin called Sayyid Ahmed Shahid, 'the Mahdi of his time'.⁵

With the western dominance of Muslim lands, the image of Islam and Muslims underwent a process of change. 'Societies have always been shaped more by nature of the media by which men communicate than by content of the communication'.⁶ The medium acts as the message. The Orientalist and the western media became the source of our information on Islam.

In the medieval picture drawn by clerics, Muhammed was an imposter and Islam a heresy with the sword as its argument and sexual indulgence as its social norm. When in 1312 the Church Council of Vienne decided to introduce Arabic at some of the European universities, the object was to know more about Islam so that its defects could be exposed and the souls of heretics be saved. With the increasing involvement of the British in India the perspective changed once more but not the image. It was still that of a licentious and lazy Saracen.

The appearance of the professional Orientalist marked the beginning of a new discipline which applied scientific historical methods to the study of Muhammad and his religion. William Muir's *Life of Mahomet* is a monument of scholarship, but the painstaking reference to the original Arabic sources made no difference to his opinion that 'the sword of Mahomet and the Kor'an are the most stubborn enemies of Civilization, Liberty and Truth which the world has yet known.'

The image of a Muslim in India is no better than in Europe. In pre-partition India Gandhiji's confirmed opinion was that the 'Musalman as a rule is a bully'.⁷ Thirty-three years after the partition of India, a Hindu journalist, O.M. Gupta said, 'The image of a Muslim in the earlier

6. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message* (Penguin, 1967), p. 8.

7. *The Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. xxiv, May-August 1924, pp. 141-2.

years of my life as told to me, was that of a blood-thirsty butcher clad in a black, checked lungi, ready to kill'.⁸ By the time H.A.R. Gibb wrote *Mohammedanism*, it was realized that the terms 'Mohammedan' and 'Mohammedanism' were no more acceptable and Islam was the name of the faith which Mohammad preached.

The newly 'discovered' name, Islam, was applied by the West to 'a motley of realities both past and present.' Since Islam in the words of Renan was the 'natural religion of the desert', it was related to the changeless wastes of Arabia. The area became the Middle East for a Eurocentred world, and the domain of 'Islamic Peoples' for Carl Brockelmann. Muslims living in undivided India, Malaya and Indonesia though outnumbering the total Muslim population of the world were ignored by Brockelmann.

The choice of the area and the nomenclature were not without significance. The 'Islamic peoples' of Brockelmann provided to the cartoonist with a difficult-to-forget caricature of a lazy and lecherous Arab or the 'terrible Turk', which would have not been possible with the inclusion of Indians and Indonesians. A fat Egyptian with a *tarboosh* and an Arab with a *kaffiyah* and camel produced an instant image of Islam.

The choice of 'Islamic' instead of 'Muslim' was to play an important and far-reaching role in influencing the mind of the western educated Muslims. This elegant semantic ambiguity would henceforth describe as 'Islamic', actions, philosophies, laws of government and rules of administration which though may be expressly against the teachings of Islam were committed or developed under Muslim rule. The *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* together with the *Arabian Nights* became part of Islamic literature.

While this selective identification of the *kaffiyah* showed one side of the coin the obverse continued to

8. Kumkum Chadha, 'The Hindu-Muslim Marriage', *The Hindustan Times Magazine*, Sunday, September 21, 1980.

proclaim the sword and the *Qur'an*. It was easier now to describe a crisis in a Muslim country as the crisis of Islam and the mob violence by the victims of a corrupt government as 'militant Islam'. By this remarkable semantic device acts of terrorism and violence and breach of mandatory Islamic ordinances became 'resurgent Islam'.

The Europeans had built their empires on the ruins of the Ottoman and the Mughul empires. Muslim hostility to European powers was natural. Political activists like Jamalluddin Afghani, Barkatulla Bhopali, Husain Ahmad Madani and Ubaidullah Sindhi had a frame of mind which could conceive only in terms of revolt and war.

No one realized that European technological progress had made the old-time chivalry a meaningless word. At this period of darkness two men arose and stood against the tide. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1836-1908). They both saw the futility of violence and foresaw that war and talk of war was suicidal and the battle of Islam would be won by the new means of communications. Both of them were declared 'kafir' by the Ulama.

Sir Syed was a statesman, an educationist and a social reformer. In spite of all the opposition, he cooperated with the British on temporal matters. But on the question of Islam he took up the challenge of the Christian missionaries and wrote a new commentary of the *Qur'an* which he thought would effectively silence critics of Islam. He was without question one of the greatest Muslim statesmen that the world of Islam produced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It must not be forgotten that after the dissolution of the Ottoman empire Indian Muslims formed almost one third of the total Muslim population of the world and even the largest Muslim country in the world today, Indonesia, encompassed probably only half of the total number of Indian Muslims.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, on the other hand, claimed to be a religious

leader, the promised Messiah. The time was ripe for such a claimant because the *mujaddid* of the 14th century *Hijrah* was also to be the promised Mahdi and Messiah. Acceptance of the claims of a man of God does not solely depend on logic and argument. But at the beginning of the 15th century *Hijrah* (1980) a very poignant event took place. The Aligarh Muslim University, divided, disturbed and torn between the warring groups of students, the faculty and the administration, called a truce and held a special convocation to honour the only Muslim Nobel laureate, physicist Dr. Abdus Salam. The university is the culmination of Sir Syed Ahmad's dreams and Abdus Salam is a follower of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad — an Ahmadi. Of these two 'kafirs', Sir Syed had chosen the secular way of logic, Mirza Ghulam Ahmed the way of revelation.

Historians such as Gershom Scholem who have studied messianic movements point to the close links between messianic expectation, the Enlightenment and the French revolution. The idea of messianism which runs through Jewish, Christian and Islamic history is characterized by catastrophe and utopianism, and both elements play an important role in the dynamics of a living faith. As Scholem observes, 'In the system of values as well as in the practical life of the ordinary medieval Jew, these two tendencies fulfilled different functions with regard to both his surrounding environment and his own universe of rabbinic tradition ... It has been one of the strangest errors of the modern *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to deny the continuity of Jewish apocalypticism.'⁹

Like Jews the early Christian Church lived in the certainty of the Second Coming. If at his first coming Jesus had been the suffering servant, even unto death, he would appear at the Second Coming (Parousia adventus) as victor and as judge of the world.¹⁰ The Jewish

9. Gershom S. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi* (Princeton, 1973), pp. 8-9.

10. *Ibid.*, see pp. 93-102 for a detailed discussion of the subject.

and Christian history makes an interesting though very sad reading after the Jewish rejection of Christ, and the Christian rejection of Muhammad.

These rejections altered the course of a spiritual 'hope and diverted their endeavour to material pursuits. The Jewish 'Messiah' seems to have changed to the idea of a Jewish State, although some Jews, such as Neturei Karta, are anti-Zionist, believing that no Jewish nation may exist until the Messiah comes. Having rejected the Prophet of Islam, the Christian concept of the Second Coming became 'a mythological projection into the future, in physical imagery'.¹¹

It is in this Jewish and Christian tradition that after Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim and its rejection Muslim scholarship started casting doubts on the authenticity of the Prophetic traditions about the Mahdi.¹² Their argument, even if it were correct, could not close the door for a *mujaddid* to appear in the 14th century *Hijrah*. The important point of identity with the Jewish and Christian precedent is not the rejection of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim, but the outright rejection of a 1300-year old tradition of an expected Messiah who would re-affirm and restore the teachings of the *Qur'an* and Muhammad, the Seal of Prophets.

Commenting on the picketing in Islamabad at the Quaid-i-Azam University during Dr. Abdus Salam's lecture, Michael T. Kaufman, the correspondent of *The New York Times* said: 'The demonstrations underscored one of the contradictions facing the Islamic world: How in the absence of a strong messianic tradition, can science and knowledge be advanced? Private discussions about the contradictions involved between development

11. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History Abridgement*, by D.C. Somervell p. 224.

12. Athar Abbas Rizvi has discussed the subject in his book *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India* (Agra University, 1965), pp. 68-75.

and dogma are not difficult to find in Pakistan which, unlike Iran or Saudi Arabia, has for nearly a century had intellectuals, universities and laboratories developed on western models. Now the scientific tradition, implanted during the British period, is being challenged by a faith that has become a State religion.¹³

The present upsurge is not religious, it is political though formulated in a religious language. Hasan al Banna's *Ikhwan al-Muslimun* or Maulana Maudoodi's *Jama'at-i-Islami*, the pre-Khomeini *Fida'iyan-i-Islam*, the organization of Algerian Ulama, and the National Salvation party in Turkey are working to capture political power. In Indonesia the old Masjumi party (now under a different name though still led by Muhammad Natsir), the Salman mosque group and in Malaysia the ABIM youth group are working for political power.

The pursuit of political power and attempts to control the government which have been the main objective of *Ikhwan al-Muslimun* or the *Jama'at-i-Islami* cannot be described as 'Islamic' upsurge in the light of the first two definitions given earlier in this article. While political parties are using religious terminology the autocratic rulers who have no constitutional right to hold their offices are also exploiting the name of Islam to get legitimacy. The World of Islam Festival in London (1976) financed by the Arabs and arranged by European Orientalists, filmed by BBC and televised by ABC is not the emergence of Islam. Two interesting results of the Festival: Noor Jehan sang at the Royal Albert Hall on 20th and 28th April, and the exhibition of Turkish, North African and Arab costumes at the Festival inspired a new fashion, 'harem pants' for hostesses.

The Iran-Iraq war, the massacre of Muslims at Hama by the Syrian government, the 'Islamic' revolution of Iran are not indicative of an upsurge, but total decadence of the majority of Muslim leaders. Economically West Asia is the richest region in the third world and strategi-

cally, the most important; the dollar owes its continued strength to Arab support and yet the 21 countries of the Arab League with a population 40 times the size of Israel were ignominiously defeated by a Jewish State, which was established only in 1948.

The *Ummah* in this struggle for political power has ceased to be a universal brotherhood. How the political constraints of one Muslim country affect the Muslims of other countries may be observed by the following questions and answers given at the Court of Inquiry to enquire into the Punjab (Pakistan) Disturbances of 1953.

Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi's answers to the Court:

Q. If we have this form of Islamic Government in Pakistan, will you permit Hindus to base their Constitution on the basis of their own religion?

A. Certainly. I should have no objection even if the Muslims of India are treated in that form of Government as Shudras and Malishes and Manu's laws are applied to them, depriving them all share in the Government and the right of a citizen. In fact such a state of affair already exists in India.

Mian Tufail Muhammad of *Jama'at-i-Islami* gave the following answers to the Court:

Q. What is the population of Muslims in the world?

A. Fifty crores.

Q. If the total population of Muslims of the world is 50 crores, as you say, and the number of Muslims living in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia, Egypt, Persia, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordon, Turkey and Iraq does not exceed 20 crores, will not the result of your ideology be to convert 30 crores of Muslims in the world into hewers of wood and drawers of water?

A. My ideology should not affect their position.

Q. Even if they are subjected to discrimination on religious grounds and denied ordinary rights of citizenship?

A. Yes.¹⁴

Today, as in the past, Islam as a dynamic and living religion is undergoing a process of renewal, restoration and adjustment. But it is very different from the petro-dollar euphoria known as 'Islamic resurgence'. Muslim history has never been without its Mansur al-Hakims, Allama Mashriqis, Ayatollah Khomeneis and Muammar Gaddafis, but Muslims society has always been able to recover from such human aberrations. Seminars on 'Islamic' penal code, the public demonstration of piety, the use of press and electronic media for continuous delivery of sermons and recitation of the *Qur'an* are the gimmicks of tottering dictators in desperate need of legitimacy.

The chicanery of 'Islamists' to wrench power from these dictators is not so obvious. But the seemingly well-researched papers, despatches and book-length pamphlets by Western scholars explaining and even extolling the 'Islamic resurgence' are calculated to divert the Muslim attention from the moral bankruptcy of the Arabs and the spiritual vacuum in the Muslim lands.

There is no doubt that in Islam there is no separation between religion and politics. Islam has been associated with power from the very beginning, but the majesty of Islam does not rest on dictators and political activists. It is unfortunate that the spread of Islam in India was obstructed and its history distorted by the newly-converted Muslim invaders. But the largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia, was not converted by a Ghaznawi or Babur. It was the beauty of Islam which won the Indonesian heart. The so-called 'Islamists' who preach violence under the name of *jihad* and work for political power and call it 'resurgence' are a blot on the fair name of Islam.

14. Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted Under Punjab Act, II of 1954 to Enquire Into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953 (Lahore, 1954), p. 228.

A sociological exploration

A.R. SAIED

TRACES of religious fundamentalism seem to persist in almost all societies — even in a society like that of the US where a high degree of secularization has taken place. But if what is happening in some Muslim countries makes us sit up and take note of Islamic fundamentalism, it is because the oil boom has invested the Muslim world with an importance it never had in the past.

Sociologically, Islamic resurgence, like any other case of reinforcement of religious orthodoxy, cannot be viewed as a sudden and self-actuated phenomenon. Its genesis must lie in certain social conditions. It is the argument of this essay that the necessary conditions actuating the resurgence were created by the rapid modernization experienced by several Islamic societies in the recent past.

In popular discussions, and often in serious ones too, modernization and development have been treated as being congruent. Consequently, the opposition to modernization from Islamic resurgence is construed as opposition to development as well. But this is hardly the reality. What Muslims are rejecting in large number is 'the modernization of the entire society in the sense of adopting western-derived institutions.' Accordingly in these countries, programmes of modernization and development are being worked out within the framework of their own preferred value-system.

In the non-Muslim countries, opposition to wholesale modernization has come largely from nationalism (not unmixed with religion) manifested in neo-traditionalism. In the Muslim countries, currently, religion — not nationalism — provides the idiom and vehicle of protest. Hence, notwithstanding the differences in the *content* of protest, the *form* of protest in Islamic resurgence

is an expression of counter-modernization, generated by the excesses of western-style modernization.

In addition, it has been suggested that the return to Islamic fundamentalism is also partly a matter of existential and political expediency. Religious traditionalism has been made a hand-maiden of vested interests. Seen in the twin perspective of counter-modernization and expediency, the sociological enigma of resurgence transcending group, class and national boundaries, and thus attaining a near universal pervasiveness in the Muslim world, becomes, at least partially, explanable.

Unfortunately, sociological analyses of Islamic resurgence are hampered by the lack of systematic empirical data. As such, the analysis that follows tends to be deductive in its logic and inferential in its conclusions. Further, in the framework adopted here, resurgence, as an expression of counter-modernization, is treated not as a mere religio-specific phenomenon but as a generic one, too. It would be helpful to begin with a consideration of the latter aspect first.

The mood of optimism which modernization had generated the world over has begun to recede, and doubts have surfaced about the prospects of human betterment along the lines charted thus far. Buffeted by the various problems that modernization has created even in developed countries, there has arisen 'an astonishingly powerful resurgence of demodernization' (Berger, et. al.).

In developing societies, where modernization has, by turns, been considered to be both 'redemption' and 'damnation', the demodernization trend in the developed countries has set off alarm signals. But, even apart from the experience of

developed societies, Third World countries on their own too have become disillusioned with modernization and its miraculous powers, since it has produced several latent disrupting consequences for which most non-western societies were not ready. These disturbances are both social-structural and social-psychological. Possibly, the consequences of modernization would have been considerably less disrupting if its pace had not been so swift.

Rapid modernization has not permitted any worthwhile social planning. Secondly, the galloping speed of modernization has prevented the development of suitable democratic institutions needed for the success of modernization. In the West, such institutions had come into existence well before industrialization. Also its social ethic, under the impact of Protestantism, had been suitably transformed for purposes of an industrial order. Thus, both politically and socially, a human base had been developed for the painful adaptations needed in shifting from a traditional order to modernity.

Muslim countries, barring a couple of shaky exceptions, were not ready for the cyclonic winds of change following the oil boom. Affluence came almost overnight and modernization, instead of unfolding itself slowly and steadily, hit them like an avalanche. Few people could grasp what modernization meant and implied, except that it had made their lives topsy turvy. To make matters worse, modernizers like the Shah were in a hurry and they forced upon the people a pace which was beyond their capacity to adjust to. Haste in such matters breeds tyranny. In the case of Iran, it definitely did. But even where the modernizers have not been tyrannical, western style modernization has been felt to be so by the Muslim masses.

The case of India is instructive here. Modernization in India was not only spread over several decades; India also had the opportunity to develop western institutions, imbibe British liberal values and, more importantly, experience major social reforms. Men of vision, from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Nehru, changed the temper of the Indian people, thus

creating a cultural base compatible with modernization. Muslim societies, on the other hand, enjoyed none of these advantages. Ataturk was only a flash in the pan.

Apart from the incompatibility of the culture base, and lack of readiness for change, modernization has another obstacle to contend within the Third World. The numerous social, economic and political transformations introduced by modernization either threaten, or even drastically alter, the traditional securities, the existing interests and status structures of a wide variety of individuals and groups.

Large-scale industrialization and the entry of multinationals has, for instance, edged out traditional manufacturers, while the newly emerged capitalist class and its policy preferences have produced the impoverishment of several traditional commercial groups, merchants and artisans. For different reasons shopkeepers and 'bazaaris', peasants and craftsmen, youth and women and urban-industrial proletariat have all become disaffected.

Thus, for several segments of the population, modernization has not been the desideratum that it was supposed to be. Instead it has only meant upheaval and discontinuity in work and culture for them. Historical experience shows that in such situations, people have turned to fascist or communist movements for relief. Else, they have resorted to various nativistic or religiously fundamentalistic movements for salvation.

Muslim societies too have had three choices before them as alternatives to western-style modernization: the fascist-totalitarian model, the leftist-socialist model, and the Islamic model. It would be relevant to mention here that there is sociological evidence to show that the social profile of those who join extremist movements, of the Left or the Right, is not very different from that of those who prefer fundamentalistic movements.

Flora Lewis has pointed out the existence of profound similarities between the Red Guards who ramp-

aged through China (in the name of Mao) and Khomeini's Islamic disciples; the orthodox militants of Israel and the Americans who call themselves the 'moral majority'. Concerning the Muslim situation, Ibrahim has observed that, in Egypt, those who joined radical leftist movements seemed to be quite similar to those who supported Islamic militant movements, except that individuals with urban backgrounds predominated the former, while people with rural origins were preponderant in the latter; while in the recent past, both Islamic and leftist ideologies have existed as alternatives to individual alienation and general social malaise, practically all the Muslim countries today are opting for the Islamic model.

Even when the adoption of the Islamic model by the ruling elite is only symbolic and a ploy for public consumption, it is made to appear that these elites are committed to the Islamic strategy for development. Why this overwhelming preference for Islam as a model for counter-modernization? In attempting to answer this question, the factors responsible for the resurgence of Islam will have been, hopefully, unravelled.

In understanding the appeal of Islam as a force in counter-modernization, it is necessary to remind ourselves of some important facts concerning the Muslim world, particularly the Arab world.

First, the stamp of religiosity on the total culture is so overwhelming that all social and political perceptions, and rationalizations tend to be Islamic rather than secular. Thus Ibrahim's observation, that '... for any militant Islamic movement, nearly half its task of recruiting members is already done by socialization and cultural sanctions since childhood' is very relevant. Pertinent also is his statement that 'for a Marxist movement the task must be three times harder; it involves eradicating negative cultural stereotypes of Marxism, teaching its precepts, politicizing and organizing.' The implication of the latter statement is that in the absence of any secular ideology of protest in the Muslim

world, Islam serves as the natural vehicle of counter-modernization.

Next, it needs to be remembered that incipient protest movements against westernization, tyranny of totalitarian regimes, social inequalities and the like, were always present in Muslim societies and were mobilized through Islamic fundamentalism. Religiously inspired opposition movements have been a recurring feature of Muslim societies. But there has never been a near universal societal disruption of the kind now found in the Muslim world. Hence, these opposition movements were sporadic and localized. Rapid modernization, however, has given a transnational character to disaffection in Muslim countries. It is in this situation that Islamic fundamentalism, which was just around the corner, has come forward to offer an acceptable ideological base for protest.

The 'return-to-Islam' move has also received strength from the failures and ineffectiveness of the secular models that had been provided by Kemal Ataturk, Nasser, the Ba'th socialists and Bourguiba. In addition, Nasser's inability to get the better of the Israelis brought into disrepute not only the Soviet Union but Marxism and socialism as well. Nor did Pakistan's experience with Bhutto's socialism provide an inspiring model. On the other hand, rightist dictators, too, have not escaped the opprobrium of the orthodox. In addition to having the stigma of illegitimacy, they also have the stink of western sponsorship. Thus the only acceptable model apparently available to the Muslim world is the one prescribed by Islam.

To be sure, strictly speaking, it is doubtful whether there is, or can be, one Islamic model of development for universal adoption by all Muslim countries. As a social reality, Islam, as sociologists have consistently shown, is not a monolithic phenomenon. But, in the present mood of resurgence, the Muslim definition of the situation is that Islam does provide an alternative strategy, through which development can be effected without suffering the concomitant side-effects of western style modernization. The Islamic model, incidentally, is not

being subscribed to simply because of a 'push' factor, namely, the absence of any other viable model. There is also a 'pull' factor. For its followers, Islam has certain inveterate plus points that make the Islamic approach to development desirable as well as feasible.

To the Muslim mind Islam offers a divinely ordained blue-print for an ideal social order. Muslims in large numbers, everywhere, have tended to believe that this ideal can be, and must be, realized in this very world. And, should it be realized it will bring about a moral, just and equitable society — which after all is the purpose of all social and political interventions in human affairs. Islam has some lofty social and this-worldly ideals which have assumed particular significance in the context of the increasing stratificational inequalities and individual atomization, that are resulting from western-style modernization.

First, there is Islam's emphasis on social equality and brotherhood. Linked with these is Islam's concern for distributive justice and some, if not total, sharing of wealth. The acme of this concern is contained in the obligatory 'Zakaat', which makes it incumbent upon the affluent to show concern for the poor. At the same time, this emphasis creates among underprivileged groups and individuals the security that their religion provides for them.

Thus, in a situation of rising inequality, accompanied by excesses of vulgar display of wealth, the equalitarianism of Islam arouses a strong desire to establish an Islamic society both among the impoverished as well as among the romantic idealists. Furthermore, and this perhaps is the real forte of Islam, there is the transcendence of the community over the individual. Accordingly, no virtuous Muslim is normatively expected to exist by himself and for himself, and it is the moral duty of every good Muslim to help build and maintain a virtuous community of the faithful. Once again, to the extent that modernization has caused the disintegration of communal solidarities and has brought about individual atomization, Islam's insistence on

the primacy of the community offers antidotes to psychological insecurities and to the loneliness of modern man. Loss of community is modern man's most severe predicament. Islam saves him from it.

The cumulative effect of these virtues, as has been widely recognised, is the germination of a particular brand of socialism within the parameters of a specific set of religious values. Accordingly, to its followers, Islam appears to be a quasi-socialistic creed, free from the twin evils of individual isolation and disintegration of communal solidarity. Thus, Berger's dictum that 'socialism, in any of its versions offers modernity and community' may be said to be valid for Islam. Being a religion, Islam offers an additional advantage over the Left brand of socialism. The latter by keeping religion out of its ambit (just as modernization does) has not been able to provide satisfactory theodicies.

Leaning on Berger again, it is seen that while socialism and modernism seek to destroy the plausibility of religious theodicies, they cannot remove the circumstances that necessitate these theodicies. Human beings continue to be stricken by social misfortunes, sickness and death, and so continue to experience sufferings in various ways. Hence, a religio-social intervention like Islam, which combines theodicy with socialism, appears to be a more acceptable alternative, at least to Muslims.

In addition to its cultural compatibility with development, the followers of Islam also see in it political adaptability as well. Thus, while Islam generally teaches acceptance of authority, it simultaneously is also a protest ideology. Ali Mazrui, while pointing out that Jesus was a gentle reformer, Buddha a meditative teacher and Mohammed a rebel against the ways of his ancestors, has observed that 'the militant tradition of rebellious leadership and submissive following has recurrently broken out in Islamic history since then.'

to the well-being of the populace, or where it is felt that the *sharia* is being grossly violated, Islam-inspired groups have not remained passive. Indeed, so perennial has been Islam's confrontation with what has been found to be religiously intolerant that the noted Islamicist, Aziz Ahmed, has observed that while over the centuries, Islam has been visualised as submission to the will of God, it has more truly been a permanent revolution.

In contemporary times, the anti-Shah revolution of Iran was not simply a conflict between modernizers and anti-modern clerics. Apart from protesting against the imposition of rapid modernization, the revolution also sought to protest against an autocratic regime which had remained totally unresponsive to the needs and desires of the common people. This characteristic of Islam makes its followers see in it a safety-valve that will not allow excesses of any kind to completely swamp their lives.

The forgoing highlights the Muslim rationalization for resurgence. But it is largely a manifest explanation which leaves uncovered an important latent dimension of this phenomenon.

It is well-known that support for the 'return to Islam' call has come from such disparate groups as 'mullahs', petty bourgeoisie, merchants and 'bazaaris', university students and youths, peasants and urban proletariat, middle class technocrats, and even some western educated women. Indeed, it has also been reported that in Egypt (and presumably in other countries too) at least some members of the affluent upper class are discarding western ways in preference to an Islamized life-style.

This heterogeneity is sociologically intriguing, and leads to the suspicion that the desire to return to the traditional values and societal arrangements of orthodox Islam cannot emanate out of a common interest when such widely divergent groups are involved. While all the groups involved are indeed protesting against western-style modern-

ization, their protests are rooted in their differing interests. As such, the present resurgence is not the monolithic phenomenon it apparently seems to be. Religious life reflects group definitions, interests and interpretations, which, in turn, are influenced by the secular concerns and positions of different groups and classes in society. This sociological axiom, then, suggests that the phenomenon of resurgence ought to be analyzed as a mode of counter-modernization in the framework of group interests.

Turning now to the differing group interests, we may first consider the 'ulemas' and 'mullahs'. Progressive modernization involves the undermining of their power and influence, inasmuch as modernization is accompanied by secularization. (Evidence suggests that in their own families, the 'ulemas' have not been able to prevent their sons from moving into secular pursuits) Thus, the onslaught of modernization is feared by this group. The history of Muslim States shows that theologians have always resisted change. Modernization is definitely the most profound challenge they face; for them it is now a 'do-or-die' situation.

In case of the petty bourgeoisie, the traders and the 'bazaaris', large scale industrialization has been a matter of serious concern, for industrialization has threatened their very existence. Pakistani experience, for instance, shows that these groups turned against Bhutto because of the growth of large-scale industry. This fear eventually turned into hatred for westernization expressed in the form of defence of Islam. Similarly, in Iran these groups made common cause with the Shah's religious opponents because their own group interests were at stake due to the Shah's strategy of aggressive modernization.

For the peasants and other rural folk, deeply steeped in age-long poverty, religion and superstition, conservatism and traditionalism have always been an important part of their way of life. Evidence from Turkey shows that even fifty years of Kemalist secularism had little impact on the religious life of the

rural folk and their commitment to Islamic traditionalism. Rapid modernization, in addition to threatening religious thoughtways, has also brought with it several 'calamities'. The mechanization of agriculture, for instance, has increased unemployment in the agricultural sector. Likewise, modernization has brought about some unacceptable changes in the position of women, children and youths, who were traditionally kept under control by the male elder, and undercut the importance of 'mullahs' and priests, who alone used to make life meaningful to them. There is, consequently, a coalition between the peasants and the 'mullahs' in thwarting modernisation, though the specific reasons are not exactly the same for the two.

The urban proletariat in Muslim countries, as in others, is psychologically an insecure group. Deprived of the basic necessities and comforts of life, their only hope is in the hereafter. Hence fundamentalism is their sustenance. In most Islamic countries the masses are in close contact with the 'mullahs', through whom percolates the message of Islamic equalitarianism, brotherhood, group solidarity and Islamic puritanism — especially its proscriptions of laxity in heterosexual interaction, consumption of alcohol and games of chance, etc. Modernisation and the western lifestyles it promotes are consequently viewed as rank immorality by this segment of the Muslim population. Indeed, it is among these people that the moral resentment against modernization is the greatest.

For this group, then, a return to Islam is the only way of checking the erosion and degradation of moral values, as also of achieving equality and piety in life. Ernest Gellner has, in a recent book, reported that a sociologist interrogating people about religion in Tehran in 1980 was told simply that it is the poor who are the Muslims.

Support for fundamentalism also comes from rural migrants who are swarming into urban centres. Unlike in the past, today's rural migrants are rootless and have to fend for themselves in the cities. Also, they have to make sense of life in

a new social environment which, as Edward Mortimer, a contemporary observer of the Muslim scene, points out 'may or may not provide them with employment, seldom provides them with adequate housing, and almost never with a set of effective social and cultural institutions to give a framework to their lives.' To help them overcome their unanchored condition, the functional alternative to the extended family is now being provided by fundamentalistic groups that subscribe to the Islamic values of mutual sharing, and Muslim brotherhood and unity.

Furthermore, these migrants, like the lower class urbanites, find modern life-style corrupting and anti-Islamic. Thus, partly their existential problems and partly their culture-shock makes them want the comforting cushion of a religion like Islam. It is not surprising then, as Fischer has reported 'that like in the 1930s, when the Muslim brotherhood had been nourished by urbanization and unemployment the current renewal of expression follows doubling of Cairo's population....'

The position of youth is also interesting. Fired as they are with a sense of idealism, youth have a strong desire to create utopias. Excesses of western style modernization, however, have given a jolt to these utopian ideals. Dried-out family ties, broken homes, extra-marital sex and abortions, etc., have frightened them. Even if not personally involved in these problems, their questioning minds have made the youth reappraise the desirability of introducing a modernized life style. For Muslim youth, the puritanical ethic of Islam appears to be a correct antidote to the excesses of western ways. But this is not the only factor that inspires them to return to Islamic values.

In contemporary developing societies, education has gained an entry into most families for the first time. Due to this first-ever contact, modern education has not, as yet, been able to create or reinforce any existing liberal ideas and attitudes imbibed from the family. Instead, first generation educated youth are seeking more avidly their pre-colonial roots and glories of their ethnic

group and/or of the nation, irrespective of the cultures or religions to which they belong.

This tendency, to return to the past, is further reinforced if the present does not bring suitable satisfactions. For young Arabs and other Muslim youth the repeated victories of Israel have been particularly traumatic. It has led them into despair and defeatism, and the only way they appear to re-establish self-respect and confidence is by turning to Islam, for it, at least, has an impressive record of past successes, both cultural and military.

The fact that western powers are aligned with Israel has given these youth a further cause for being hostile towards the West and all that it stands for. In fact, the image of the West today is that of a morally degraded culture and an abettor of Israel. Since, in the struggle against Israel Russian support too has been disappointing, the only alternative is to return to Islam.

The interest of the middle class technocrats (who are said to constitute a big source of recruitment to Muslim fundamentalistic movements everywhere) are more mundane and pragmatic. Modernization has brought, in its train, a strong emphasis on technical education. Those who opt for it expect high rewards to follow their arduous training. But these expectations are rarely fulfilled because of the lag between educational expansion and economic development. Hence mobility aspirations have in many cases received a set-back. Students enrolling in such courses belong predominantly to lower-middle and middle classes, whose interest in education is primarily vocational. Further, such education entails great sacrifices for the families concerned.

Thus, the disappointment in the sphere of employment leads to disillusionment with modernization among such individuals/groups. Their frustrations are aggravated when they observe that those belonging to westernized elite families do much better in life due to 'proper connections'. Colin Smith found that graduates of the elitist American University in Cairo can always be

sure of a job, while graduates of the Arabic Universities 'whose students are often better qualified' enjoy no such guarantee. 'Here', as Smith points out, 'then is the breeding ground for the fundamentalists with all its xenophobic, isolationist appeal to cultural roots.'

Finding legitimate secular avenues of mobility blocked, several middle level, technically trained graduates are known to have taken recourse to social mobility and social recognition through affiliation with fundamentalistic groups, brotherhoods, etc.

Finally, it may also be suggested that many of these individuals, because of their social background and experience, are educated only in a formal sense. Due to the absence of a tradition of liberalism in the family, they lack the intellectual sophistication to comprehend the intricacies and complexities of modern life. On the other hand, their technical training makes them desire definite and precise answers to the problems of life. Such answers fundamentalism alone can provide.

The willingness of western-educated women to renege on modernization has surprised several observers of the Muslim scene. What motivates these women to abandon the freedom that modernistic life-style apparently bestows upon them? It has often been overlooked that in non-western societies, rapid modernization has been only a mixed blessing for women. As is well known, extra-familial roles and responsibilities, along with career ambitions, have contributed to various stresses and strains in the lives of women. Thus, women in modernizing societies are seeking respite from the conflicting demands upon them.

Simultaneously, women who have chosen to step out of the secluded shelter of their homes, have today become more vulnerable to sexual excesses and assaults which have given them a sense of insecurity and made them wonder whether there exists true emancipation for them. Various covert sexual demands, even in 'decent' job situations, are not unknown to women. Muslim women

who have been exposed to life in western countries have become even more sensitive to these situations on account of the general laxity in several mores in these countries.

Contrary to popular belief and imagination, polygamy is not a serious threat in the lives of educated Muslim women. But sexual promiscuity, teenage pregnancy, and rape in public places are. Cultural contacts often tend to be selective, and Muslim female students in Paris, London or New York evidently give more serious attention to such features of western metropolitan life. Selective cultural contact is known, at times, to intensify rather than dilute ethnocentrism. Western educated Muslim women who retreat from modernization, possibly, illustrate this axiom best. Western media has often dramatized educated Muslim women's return to the veil. But Fischer has perceptively observed that return to Islamic dress is an attempt to construct a 'moral armour' against corruption.

In Muslim societies, given their traditions of sex-segregation, heterosexual interaction in offices, universities and other sectors of public life, is generally disadvantageous to females. To interact freely and on terms of equality, considerable emancipation is needed on the part of both sexes. Since this is, as yet, unavailable, a return to Islamic ways appears to be a preferable alternative to the present schizophrenic westernized emancipation. The Islamic style at least affords moderation, without creating the guilt that one is not being a good Muslim by mixing freely with the opposite sex.

Movement away from modernization is not confined only to the segments of the population discussed above. In the Muslim countries, ruling elites too have found it expedient, for the sake of their personal interests, to desert western-style modernization or leftist-type socialism. Pakistan and Bangladesh offer good illustrations. Thus the flamboyant and 'modernized' Bhutto's retreat from socialism to the slogan of 'musawat-e-Mohammadi', with emphasis on such Islamic symbols as prohibition of drinking and

gambling and changing the weekly holiday from Sunday to Friday.

Pakistan's present rulers, as is widely recognized, are constantly haunted by the fact of their constitutional illegitimacy. Endorsement and encouragement of fundamentalism is the only cloak under which this illegitimacy can be covered. In the heat and fire of fundamentalistic fervour 'maulvis' and masses both overlook problems of lack of civil constitutional legitimacy.

In Bangladesh, apart from the problems of legitimacy, the present regime is one in a chain of ineffective governments that operate against overwhelming socio-economic odds. Saudi and Kuwaiiti assistance is the main lifebuoy of this country. In the hey-days of American foreign aid, recipient countries found it in their interest to encourage 'Americanization'. Today's good Samaritans are the Arabs, so expediency for the rulers of an impoverished Muslim country, like Bangladesh, lies not merely in Islamization but also in 'Arabization'.

Thus, in both Pakistan and Bangladesh support to Islamic orthodoxy has an instrumental dimension. But while Pakistan and Bangladesh were not avowedly secular-socialistic States, Algeria was. Yet, in the latter, with developmental schemes encountering difficulties, fundamentalism has become aggressive and, according to Piscatori, even the leaders of this socialistic State are finding Islam 'attractive'. Indeed, even in the fundamentalism of Saudi Arabia, the vested interest of ruling elites plays a major role.

In this case, too, Piscatori's observations are relevant. 'The single most important pillar of their (Saudi rulers) legitimacy', he points out, 'is their claim to be Islamic rulers. If they are seen not to be so Islamic after all, then their future is surely in doubt.'

It may be argued that the need for projecting a staunch Islamic image is particularly strong in Saudi Arabia because both hereditary monarchy as well as the massive concentration of wealth in the hands of the Saudi rulers are regarded as illegitimate in terms of the Wahabi

version of the Islamic ideology accepted there. As such, Saudi rulers run the risk of being engulfed by the rising waves of fundamentalistic revolutionary ardour.

In some other countries, the rulers' encouragement of Islamic orthodoxy reveals yet another instrumental dimension. For example, in Malaysia support to Islamic resurgence, as Jansen has pointed out, is a technique through which 'official Islam' is trying to contain 'militant Islam.' Thus, Malaysian official support, Jansen goes on to suggest, may well be a tactic to coopt and outbid the efforts of the militants.

The present paper has sought to examine the 'why' of the current resurgence of Islam. The answer was provided by focussing attention on the dynamics of rapid modernization, group interests and the linkages of these two with fundamentalism, in Muslim societies.

An important question (outside the scope of the present paper) remains namely, 'what after resurgence?' As Trevor-Roper (in his review of Naipaul's *Among the Believers*) has noted, 'the Islamic, revival is not a mere condition to be examined.... It is a movement; and it is not yet finished; it will have a next stage.'

It could be reasonably surmised that a total disjunction of Islam and modernization will not occur. Excesses of Islamic traditionalism, like those of modernization, will have to cease somewhere, some time, and a new equation between the two will have to evolve. Islamic fundamentalism will have to make peace with modernization, particularly with its developmental component. For, irrespective of its force and power, fundamentalism obviously cannot generate an Islamic technology or Islamic medicine, etc.

In this new equation, the cultural components of modernity are likely to operate within the parameters of Islamic values and social modes. But the eventual nature of the new equation will ultimately depend on the existential conditions in which the Islamic countries find themselves in the near future.

Islamic revival in Iran

A. H. H. ABIDI

IF the Islamic revival in Iran is by and large treated as an enigma, it is mostly because of inadequate understanding of Islam and of Islam's position in Iran. A study of history, culture, and the Iranian people's attitude towards religion in general and towards Islam in particular is imperative. Depending on the mode of approach, the developments in Iran can be interpreted in distinctly contradictory, though in themselves consistent terms, such as Islamic, anti-Islamic, Marxist and liberal democratic.

The fact that a mass movement and a real revolution was triumphantly organized and led by an acknowledged religious leader has vexed many lay observers. Equally puzzling for most is the fact that the revolutionary regime of Iran is dominated by the clerics. And yet instead of the scepticism some had expressed earlier, the old sceptics are now suggesting that the Islamic regime in Iran has come to stay. But these could be motivated speculations. What is required is a dispassionate analysis.

The single comprehensive question is in two parts — why such an Islamic revival in Iran? What are its

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implications for Iran itself, for the region, and for the world.

In order to single out the causes of Islamic revival in Iran, it should be first noted that its sources are no different from those that produced the secular movement against the Pahlavis. In both cases there was initially a close degree of coalescence between two, dissimilar, social segments (the Bazaaris and the Clerics) which joined hands against Reza Khan earlier and then his son. However, once the revolution was over, the side which had effective organization and influence elbowed everybody else aside and emerged supreme.

Islamic revivalism is not new to Iran. The causes for its latest resurgence could be outlined in numerous ways. Historically, Iran has had a long-established tradition of Islam being closely intertwined with major issues of State, acquiring thereby a political character. Correspondingly, the ideas and practices of the Iranian clergy, in keeping with the concept of *ijihad*, were not static. They have reflected the changing social, economic and political realities.

The transformation of the Iranian polity into the Shi'i mould by the Safavid rulers (1501-1736) had distinct religio-political overtones and it gratified the clergy. Yet, reacting to the immoral and un-Islamic practices of some of the Safavids, the

Iranian *mujtahids* (Islamic divines) staked their claims as more rightful rulers. This happened in as early as the 17th century. Under the Qajars (1797-1925) the political potential of the *mujtahids* often appeared powerful in response to two distinct threats to Iran and Islam—encroachments by western powers, and westernization.¹ Some regional revolts in Iran after World War I, like the Khiyabani revolt in Azerbaijan and the Jangali movement in Gilan, had leaders who had religious backgrounds.

Even though the Pahlavi Shahs' thrust was secular, the two could not afford to ignore the political weight of the Islamic elements and Shi'i divines.² Yet, Reza Khan's policy of secularization alienated them both. There was a recrudescence of religious politics after his abdication. Strong religious elements existed behind the oil-nationalization movement of Dr. Mohammed Musaddiq³ who was urged by Ayatollah Syed Abol Qasim Kashani to adopt an Islamic course. Differences on this point caused a split. The *Marj'a-e taglid* (source for following) at that time, Ayatollah al-Ozma Syed Aqa Hussain Bourujirdi, who was otherwise averse to politics and temporal affairs, issued a *fatwa* in 1960 denouncing the government's proposed land reforms.

A radical shift occurred with the advent of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1963. About two decades earlier, in his book *Kashf al-Asrar* (1940), this

1. The Iranian *ulema* played a dominant role in the Russo-Iranian War (1826), movement against the Reuter and tobacco concessions, opposition to the secular reforms of Mirza Mohammad Taqi (the Amire Kabir) and Amin-od-Dauleh, the movement for the Constitution, and the nationalist agitation in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5).

2. This point was evident when Reza Khan dropped his plan of the republic, and visited the holy Shi'i shrines in Kerbala and Najaf for thanks-giving, after his successful campaign against Sheikh Khaz'al of Mohammerah. Mohammad Reza Shah advertised his divine visions and protection, Hajji, and visits to the holy shrines in Qom and Mashhad.

3. Raymond N. Habiby, and Fariborz Ghavidel, 'Khumayni's Islamic Republic' in Michael Curtis, ed., *Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (Boulder, Colorado, 1981), p. 140.

Ayatollah had openly opposed monarchy and had advocated that those trained in religious law should rule the country. Later (on 15 Khor-dad 1342/5 June 1963), he launched blistering attacks on the then prevalent State system, the proposed reforms and the numerous agreements with the United States. After his ouster from the country, Khomeini continued to keep in touch with, and direct, the Islamic movement in Iran from the holy shrine of Najaf in Iraq, and developed his ideas further. They were compiled in the second book, entitled *Hukumat-e Islami*, published in 1971.

Bare socio-political factors by themselves cannot explain the Islamic resurgence in Iran, for these variables have existed in most of the Muslim States without producing a matching response. Islamic resurgence has to be understood in the context of the distinct religious doctrines of Shi'i Islam, which have been imbibed by the vast majority of the Iranian people, conferring on their *ulema* an unparalleled position of authority and leadership.

Shi'i Islam does not believe in democracy as it is understood in modern times. Its cardinal principle is that sovereign power rests not with the people but with God. Secondly, according to the *Ithna-Ashari* (Twelver) Shi'i belief, the supreme authority for guidance and control in the nation's affairs continued after the Prophet with the infallible Imams (*A'emma-e Masoomin*); and since the occultation of the twelfth Imam, Mehdi (874 A.D.), it developed on the *Marj'a-e taglid* (source for following) under the doctrine of *Vilayet-e-Faqih* (Rule of Jurisprudent).

The latter doctrine created a schism in Islam, centring on the conflict between two sets of concepts—Imamat/Vilayet (Rule of Imam) versus *Khilafat* (Rule of Khalifah) *Imarat* (Rule of Amir). Among the Shi'is themselves, two schools of thought—*usooli/mujtahidi* (rational) and *akhbari* (traditional)—emerged in the 17th century.⁴ Already, as re-

4. Sayid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: Royalty, Religion and Revolution* (Canberra, 1980), p. 138.

gards the attitude towards monarchy, there were two distinct traditions. Similarly, views differed on the nature of relationship between religion and politics.

Unlike any other socio-political ideology, Islam has a divine book and a message of its own as its base. The *Quran* does not encourage *fassad* (mischief, plot, insurrection of *fitnah* (dissension). *Fitnah* in the sense of persecution is, in fact, regarded as 'worse than slaughter' (II, 191). More positively, the *Quran* asserts: 'And fight them until persecution is no more' (II, 192). Further, the Book reiterates the doctrine of '*amr bil m'arouf va nahi 'an il munkar*' (Enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong). In addition, for instance, the Prophet states, 'There is no duty to obedience in sin.'

Along with such Quranic and Hadithic injunctions, the militant Shi'i clergy drew added inspiration, in their exhortation in the fight against the evils of immoral and oppressive rule, from the historical/religious precedents set by certain heroes of Shi'i Islam. Thereby, a religious sanction was found to mobilise the masses in political campaigns against secular rulers in different periods of history.

In popular imagination, a *mujtahid* partook of the charisma of the occulted Imam, and Iranians in general had deeper faith and respect for the *ulema* than they had for the temporal rulers. The *ulema* used the mosque and the *minber* (pulpit) for the propagation of their political message. In order to break the hold of the clergy, the Shah's government encouraged the SAVAK agents to infiltrate into its ranks, and the middle class, too, was under strict surveillance. The Shah even instituted a Religious Corps but it proved counter-productive.

A fundamental characteristic feature of the Islamic mentality is its spiritual consciousness. Such a frame of mind is inspired by the confidence that this world is just a reflection of a transcendental order and that the only ultimate reality is spiritual. The Iranian *ulema* detes-

ted the spiritual obtuseness shown by the foreigners as well as the denigration of Islam by the temporal rulers.

For the Iranians, like some other oriental people, spiritual truth is not a matter of mere personal or private conscience; it is embedded in a divine script and divinely ordained laws. All of life is subject to this vision, and failure to obey these laws means the violation of God's will. Islamic spiritual consciousness affirms absolutes — religiously, ethically, socially and politically. The *Quran* makes it abundantly clear that there can be no compromise with anything that seek to violate the codes and traditions of the divine law.

Present-day Islamists in Iran believe that the world is caught in the most tragic spiritual crisis, as it has lost its mythological roots.⁵ Khomeini built up his vision in this context and, in his fight against the Shah, he mobilised the masses in this spirit. This meant a massive galvanization and a readiness to sacrifice even one's life for the sake of the sacred cause.

In terms of morality, Iran has had a tradition of faith in the conflict between virtue and vice. Only such moral and just kings as were endowed with *farr* (mystical halo) commanded loyalty, not those who were tyrants or corrupt. Justice is next in importance to monotheism, among the fundamentals of Shi'i Islam. The *ulema* developed the doctrine that a government not guided and controlled by them was immoral. The private morality of the kings and the ruling elite were under people's constant gaze. In this respect, the record of the Pahlavis was highly dismal and detestable. What was worse, under the garb of modernisation, the government promoted a new value system which was not only un-Islamic but even base and vulgar by oriental standards. This grave weakness provided an effective handle to the Islamists to whip up the anti-regime and pro-Islamic sentiments.

5. Robin Woodsworth Carlsen, *Crisis in Iran: A Microcosm of the Cosmic Play* (Vancouver, 1979), pp. 35-41.

Among the political factors leading to the Islamic resurgence in Iran, the following were prominent: absolute despotism; denial of basic human rights; loss of credibility of the government; separation of religion from politics and bid to create rift between religious elements and masses; revival and glorification of the pre-Islamic past at the cost of the existing Islamic structure; ever-increasing discrimination among and against the masses, promoting a kind of class system; domination of Muslim by non-Muslims in government offices and national institutions; subservience and extraordinary concessions to a Christian superpower⁶; non-dependence of the *ulema* on the government patronage; superficial recrudescence of Islamic political fortunes in neighbouring Pakistan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia⁷; cultivation of the Iranian clergy by the Soviet embassy for a twin objective, namely to win acceptance as friends of Islam, and to promote and sustain anti-US bias in Iran.⁸

The economic causes could be subdivided under two heads: the state of the clergy, and the state of the nation. In one case, the base was spiritualism and, in the other, it was materialism. Because of *Khoms*⁹ and *zakat* dutifully paid by the Iranian Muslims to their clergy, this class not only grew immensely rich but it also independently ran numerous institutions for public welfare, thus maintaining strong and effective links with the masses.

As against their sound position, the general economy of Iran faltered in recent years. A vicious circle of increased money supply, rising expectations, inflation, corruption, frustration, and social tensions developed. Gaps in income widened. Agriculture was ruined and the illu-

6. Murtaza Mutahhary, *Islamic Movements in Twentieth Century* (Tehran, 1979), pp. 55-60.

7. *Asnaad-e Laaneh-e Jasoosi* (n.p., n.d.), Number 8, p. 179.

8. *Ibid.*, Number 7, p. 55.

9. This represents one-fifth of the annual sayings to be distributed half as alms and the other half to the *mujtahids* as the Imam's share.

sion of industrial growth was exposed. Mounting unemployment and cost of living agitated the layman's mind and he was attracted to the rich religious establishments which regularly disbursed stipends to the people working with them.

The ruling elite in Iran, with the Shah at the apex, developed a highly obnoxious behaviour pattern based on a superiority complex, arrogance, and self-righteousness. Part of the Pahlavi Shahs' alienation from the masses was due to their innate misgivings about their own legitimacy. They were particularly harsh on the Shi'i clergy who often branded them as imposters. The Iranian psyche has always been poetic and potent. The psychological context of the anti-regime movement was the ego confrontation syndrome. Psychologically, the masses were attracted to the call of Islam because it rejected the idea of superiority based on status or position, and all through the clergy had lived with the people and cherished their aspirations. Moreover, most of their accusations against the regime were proved correct.

These multifarious factors amply answer the question 'Why the Islamic revival in Iran?' It is thus evident that whereas the secular nationalists and politicians were concerned only with the political, economic and administrative problems and groped for direction, the religious leaders were one with the people in every sphere of life. They also had a well-knit organizational structure as well as a blueprint for an alternative government.

The Islamic resurgence in Iran is, therefore, not a freak phenomenon. It is the product primarily of the long continuing religiosity of the people gaining a political expression in the face of an alienated, unresponsive, and corrupt political and administrative system. The leadership was provided by the clerical segment because of its well-entrenched religious, social and economic position. The movement was an indigenous response to the challenge from internal and external sources, and it was built on and around six symbolic M's namely, Mehdi, mul-

lah, minber, masjid, mustaz'af (deprived), and martyrdom.

The Islamio Movement of Iran (*Nehzat-e Islami-e Iran*) is not a monolithic whole. Differences in ideological orientation and tactical approaches are perceptible. This is because of the historical Shi'i traditions or the doctrine of *ijtihad*. So far as the basic question of relationship between the Imam and the Amir/Shah, or the ecclesiastical and temporal authorities, are concerned, two distinct traditions were set by the second and third *Ihna 'Ashari* Imams (Hasan and Husain).

Whereas the former compromised with the temporal authority for the sake of peace and unity in the *ummah* and treated religion as his preserve, the latter took a composite stand. He refused to offer *bi'at* (fealty) to the temporal authority. That difference in approach has continued in the Shi'i clergy ever since. In Iran, they constitute the main moderate and militant segments with the traditionists, the modernists, and the conformists in between. In post-revolutionary Iran, the militant group no doubt also acquired a place of importance.

It is the doctrine of *ijtihad* which explains the varying attitudes, at different points of time, of the Iranian clergy towards State affairs and other claims to rule. Ayatollah Khomeini is a fundamentalist and an activist as well. He concentrated his attention on training the *ulema* not merely in religious subjects but also as rulers of the community. Departing from the tolerant posture, he decreed that since the policies and practices of the Pahlavi Shahs and the State system were anti-Islamic, not only had the Shah forfeited his legitimacy but the monarchical system itself must also be terminated.

Since the end of the rule of the *Khulafa-e Rashidoon* (the righteous Caliphs) in the seventh century A.D., the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is in the fourth year of its establishment, presents the first case of a State directly ruled and run by the *ulema*. Their dominance has been challenged by the religious as well as secular elements. To the ruling clerical class itself, their new task is

a great challenge and experience. Within a span of four years, they have deliberately demolished the secular infrastructure in every field and the pangs of building afresh, according to their own light, are natural and inevitable.

In the meantime, a streak of transition is perceptible. The militant clerical leadership, bearing the onerous responsibilities of statecraft and management, has gradually mellowed and even appears 'moderate' to the still diehard *usoolis* who recently emerged as the 'Hojjatiyah' group. This is an interesting development to watch, for the basic principle of the *usooli/mujtahidi* schools of thought is that the pronouncements and rulings of the *marj'a-e-taglid* are valid only in his life time.

In effect, it implies that the writ of the living supreme *fagih* and *marj'a-e-taglid*, Ayatollah al-Ozma Syed Rouhollah Mousvi Khomeini, may not be binding after he departs from the scene. Anticipating this likely complication, and anxious to surmount this element of potential instability, the followers of the Line of Imam Khomeini have recently made a move to put Ayatollah al-Ozma Sheikh Hussain Ali Montazeri in a position of readiness for smooth succession. Montazeri is relatively young and he has yet to acquire the charisma of Khomeini.

Khomeini's visions of Islam and the State were challenged by equally erudite and prominent Shi'i *ulema*, such as the moderate Ayatollah Syed Kazam Sharfatmadari and the radical, late Ayatollah Syed Mahmud Taleqani.¹⁰ An Islamic thinker, the late Dr. Ali Shari'ati, developed an alternative innovative and progressive thesis which accommodated Islam, revolt and change in historical, religious, sociological, economic and political terms.¹¹ The number of

10. Nikki R. Keddie, 'Religion, Society and Revolution in Modern Iran' in Michael E. Bonnie and Nikki R. Keddie, eds., *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (Albany, New York, 1981), p. 33.

11. For analytical studies see Hamid Algar, *On the Sociology of Islam: Lectures by Ali Shari'ati* (Berkeley, 1979); A.H.H. Abidi, 'Dr Ali Shari'ati: The Man and

Iranian Muslims believing in and adhering to the ideas of these three teachers is considerable.

Islamic revivalism as propounded by Khomeini and his kind of divines has created a host of problems for the people and, in turn, revivalism confronts numerous challenges that come from many directions. The central point in all this is the human response to change. The Iranian regime has launched an all-out cultural revolution in order to reach its cherished goal of Islamization. Islam is projected in highly revolutionary colours. It is being argued that the revolution was wrought not merely for improving the material comforts of life, but for regulating the nation's affairs according to the principles of Islam. The present stage is one of transition and the difficulties associated with it have to be borne with patience and sacrifice.

The other approach to the developments in Iran is secular and materialistic. From this point of view, the picture looks grim and dismal. According to this, since the revolution led by Islamists has taken Iran backward, the hold of the clergy should be broken for the sake of material recovery. In fact, the crucial issue which will determine the destiny of Islamic revivalism and of Iran is that of the conflict between the spiritual and material value systems.

It is difficult to quantify the degree of support either of these views enjoy there. Meanwhile, the Islamic revisionists cannot ignore two fundamental points: genuine material needs of the people, and the ultimate compulsive force of the masses. There are indications that the Iranian government has initiated with full awareness economic planning in a manner which meets both needs.

The trickiest threat to the Islamic Movement in Iran may be posed by the *munafiq* (hypocrite) elements who are not necessarily of the *Mujahidin-e-Khalq* group. Most probably, they are counter-revolutionary agents who have infiltrated into the dominant circles feigning Islamic fervor.

His Ideas', *Islam and the Modern Age* (New Delhi), May 1982, pp. 76-100.

Some of them were spotted out recently.

Turning to the implications of the Islamic revival in Iran, one finds a mixed picture with positive and negative shades both in the religious and political domains. The backbone of the Iranian revolution, Islamic consciousness, derives its legitimacy and authority from the original Islam and Islamic sources and heritage. But, in the Iranian context, it faces a complex problem for certain pre-Islamic dogmas and myths have been absorbed over a period of time by the Islamic thought in Iran.

Whereas such a synthesis has enriched the cultural heritage of Iranian Islam, it was seen by the puritan non-Iranians as a *bid'at* (innovation) in the original creed. Since the Iranian Islamic resurgence is also pan-Islamic in its political sweep, it is viewed as a menace by some of the existing Islamic regimes. For their own protection, the latter have launched a counterattack on the Iranian revolution by questioning, among other things, its Islamic credentials. It could be easily dubbed sectarian since the Shi'is constitute a minor segment of the world Muslim population.¹²

Because of Shi'i numerical size, many fondly hoped that the Iranian threat would dissolve itself in course of time. And yet; there is no gainsaying the fact that most of the governments in Muslim States today feel insecure, given the tremors the Iranian revolution has produced in other Muslim lands.

The other Muslim regimes in the region have tried to meet the challenge, either by going in for cosmetic democratization or by loosening their purse strings in order to attract the support of larger segments of their population. But since the Iranian threat is also Islamic in content, it has to be met on the religious plane as well. In either case, the region's governments and people

confront a dilemma. Unbridled political and economic concessions are considered risky. Islamization may create problems of an equally serious nature unpalatable to the regimes.

T

The prospects of an Islamic bloc under the Iranian umbrella, although cherished by the Iranian leadership, should not be unduly exaggerated. Historically, the Iranian Muslims, till the recent rise of Khomeini, never displayed any pan-Islamic sentiments. Nonetheless, the positive aspects of the Islamic model in Iran have demonstrated Islam's ability to stand as an independent ideology against powerful forces, both within and outside; they also demonstrate the ability of the Islamic clergy to engineer and sustain a revolution by gaining the support even of the people who had no particular commitment to Islam, and doing so in an ideological and revolutionary manner.

The political dimensions of Islamic resurgence in Iran have had an acknowledged impact on the region as well as outside it. Its reverberations are felt in the near and distant neighbourhood where the socio-political and military strategies are being revamped.¹³ In its attitude to the two super powers, the Islamic Republic of Iran has presented a unique spectacle. Having kept both of them guessing, it has provided a fresh dimension to the Non-aligned Movement.

A study of the policy statements emanating from the post-revolution leadership of Iran bring out certain interesting points. First, there is the call for revolutionary spirit and emotional unity among the Muslims. The Islamic concept of *ummah* is not restricted by time, space of territory. Second, the emphasis on the principle of *tawhid* (unity), which does not accept racial, genetic, physical, class, social, political, national or economic differences among Muslims. Third, the stress on the unity of religion and politics. Fourth, the idea of

12. According to a recent study, the ratio of Sunnis to Shi'is is approximately five to one. Roger M. Savory, 'The problem of sovereignty in an Ithna Ashari ("Twelver") Shi'i State', in Michael Curtis, n. 3, p. 131.

13. For an Iranian version of the impact, see Abul-Fazl Ezzati. *The Revolutionary Islam and the Islamic Republic* (Tehran, 1981), pp. 253-2.

economic integration among the Muslim States and within the Third World countries is reiterated in a new form.

The prospects for the latter look good on the surface, given the facts of territorial contiguity, immense manpower, vast natural resources, and economic complementarity of the Muslim States. But the constraints are also there. The situation is similar to that of the Arabs, where the great potential for unity could not be realised due to well-known internal and external factors. Revolutionary Islamic Iran's call for a new blend of Islamic revival and unity is not likely to fare any better. It will most likely be diluted, distorted or defeated by the ruling elites of other Muslim States, or subverted by the super powers in defence of their own vital national interests.

A

A word about the oft-repeated talk of export of Islamic revolution or resurgence. For sure, these are not exportable commodities. The Iranian phenomenon is indigenous and it has built itself up on the specific set of domestic factors. Even though the socio-economic and political situation may be similar in some of the neighbouring States, such conditions, by themselves, cannot precipitate a reproduction of the Iranian model. Every time it has to be a different compound consistent with the genius of different people, their traditions and institutions.

The Islamic resurgence in Iran is still in a state of flux. It has flourished on the aroused emotions of the people. It confronts numerous challenges. Yet, it has shown a tendency to consolidate itself partly through evolving some solid institutions in which the masses have not only participated but have also developed stakes. It has perfected a sound pyramidal structure of organization whose strength was demonstrated when, inspite of a variety of repeated internal and external pressures, the infrastructure stood firm. It will last so long as the Iranian masses support it. If it fails, it will have disastrous consequences for the Islamic clergy — not only in Iran, but elsewhere, too.

Religion and the nation state

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

ISLAM and nationalism are often considered contradictory terms. Apart from theologians, many other Muslims trained in modern disciplines also maintain that Islamic internationalism is both political as well as religious. Even a great Muslim thinker like Dr. Iqbal entered into polemics on this question with Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, a leader of the nationalist Jamiat-ul-Ulama and the rector of Darul-Ulum-Deoband. Strangely enough, Iqbal defended Islamic internationalism and Maulana Madani composite Indian nationalism.

Maulana Madani, in support of his position, quoted profusely from the *Koran*. The main thrust of the Maulana's argument was that the word *qaum* (community or nation in the modern context) has been used over two hundred times in the *Koran* but nowhere is it indicative of separate *qaumiyyat* (nationhood) for believers and unbelievers, for prophets and kafirs. On the other hand, quoting the verses, the Maulana proves that the *Koran* asserts that his prophets and kafirs belong to the same *qaum*; the only difference

between them is that of belief.

Nationalism is a territorial or geographical concept, not a religious one. Apart from territory, its other determinant factors are language, culture and common economy. The *Koran* too, apart from territory, recognises the significance of these factors in a very explicit way. 'For every folk (*qaum*) is a guide' (13:7). Also, it says, 'And we never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk' (14:7). Thus, we see that Allah has sent His messengers to different folks or communities in their own languages. The commonality of territory and language is duly recognised by the *Koran*. Even cultural and ritualistic differences have not been overlooked: 'Unto each nation have we given sacred rites which they are to perform; so let them not dispute with thee of the matter, but summon thou unto thy Lord. Lo! thou indeed followest right guidance' (22:67).

Having recognised all the important determinants of *qaumiyyat* (nationhood) i.e., language, culture and territory it would not be in the right spirit of the *Koran* to maintain

that there is no place for nationalism in Islam.

Even the practice of the Prophet (*sunnah*) gave it due recognition by entering into a pact with different tribes and religious groups of Madina to constitute a political community. This pact has been referred to in Islamic history as *Sahifah*.

Referring to it and quoting Ibn Ishaq, the first biographer of the Prophet, Ibn Hisham tells us: 'Ibn Ishaq said that the Messenger of God drew up an agreement between the immigrants and the helpers (and) in which Jews were also included. They (i.e., the Jews) were allowed to follow their religion and retain their properties. Some conditions were laid down on them and they were allowed some conditions. (See Ibn Hisham *Sirah* Vol. 1, Cairo, 1332 A.H.). The *sunnah* of the Prophet thus shows that a political community, comprising followers of different faiths, can be created on the basis of a mutual pact. For the then tribal-ridden Arabia, this pact was nothing short of a political revolution.

The noted orientalist, Nicholson, comments: 'No one can study it without being impressed by the political genius of its author. Ostensibly a cautious and tactful reform, it was in reality a revolution. Muhammad did not strike openly at the independence of the tribes, but he destroyed it, in effect, by shifting the centre of power from the tribe to the community.' (R.A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, Cambridge, 1907, pp-173). It was on the basis of this pact that the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind justified its stand on composite nationalism and accepted the Congress ideology. Thus, both the theory and (the Prophet's) practice of Islam do not contradict the modern concept of nationalism.

Even in Pakistan, which is supposedly based on the Islamic concept of polity, this question is far from resolved. The ideology of Pakistan itself has run into rough weather. Those who — and the Jamaat-e-Islami people are prominent among them — reject the territorial concept of nationalism have to face many embarrassing questions. If the geo-

graphical nation is antithetical to Islam, can any Muslim, from any other country, be allowed to settle in Pakistan? Obviously even the Jamaat government, if ever formed in Pakistan, would not be able to follow any such course.

It is very difficult to reject in practice, if not in theory, the reality of the modern concept of nation-State. The Jamaat-i-Islami, whatever its theoretical formulations, cannot easily come to terms with the complex reality by rejecting territorial nationalism in practice. Religious nationalism becomes a contradiction in terms. It is very difficult for the peoples of diverse cultures, languages and modes of living to constitute an homogenous nation. It was precisely for this reason that the erstwhile East Pakistan ceded from Pakistan. There was, among the people of East Pakistan, an acute sense of separate language and culture. This, coupled with an equally acute sense of economic injustice, finally brought about the inevitable separation.

The Jamaat, as is well known, believes in religious nationalism if it can be so described. It believes that Islam is a sufficiently strong religious bond to make for a viable unity and to constitute a State. While international religious unity has been a distinguishing trait of the history of Islam, political unity has never been its automatic fallout. One must distinguish between religious unity and political unity. It would be a serious mistake to treat them on par.

The eminent historian, Ibn Khaldun, too was aware of this fact. His theory of '*asabiyah*' (group solidarity) bears this out. He maintains that the feeling of group solidarity is essential for retaining power. According to him different groups with different opinions and desires cannot coexist cohesively, despite belonging to one religion.

Giving an example of this incompatibility, he says, 'One may compare what has happened in this connection in Ifriqiyyah and the Maghrib from the beginning to the present time. The inhabitants of those lands are Berber tribes and groups. The

first (Muslim) victory over them and the European Christians (in the Maghrib) was of no avail. They continued to rebel and apostatized time after time ... After the Muslim religion had been established among them, they went on revolting and seceding, and they adopted dissident religious opinions many times.' (Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, tr. by Franz Rosenthal and abr. by N.J. Dawood, Princeton University Press, 1970, pp 130-31).

In view of these empirical facts since the early period of Islam, it would be difficult to maintain an ideological position against the concept of the nation-State. However, the recent Iranian revolution has once again given spurt to the idea of Islamic internationalism. In a Haj seminar held in August 1982 by the Muslim Institute in London, Dr. Kalim Siddiqui said that, 'The Islamic movement must commit itself to the abolition of nation-States that divide the *Ummah* in the fashion of a jigsaw puzzle.'

Dr. Siddiqui insisted on redrawing the 'entire map of the Muslim world.' He suggested that the 40 or more Islamic nation-States be replaced by four regional Islamic States. According to him, a new Islamic State will emerge in the Far East 'taking in modern Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangla Desh, and parts of the Philippines.' Then there will be an Islamic State consolidating Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, the Gulf States, the Arabian Peninsula and areas now under Russian colonialism. The third Islamic State would include Egypt, Somalia, the Sudan, and the States of the North African coast up to and including Morocco and Mauritania. The fourth new State would take in Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, and little republics that are strewn along the western and southern coast of West Africa from Senegal to Gabon.' (See *Crescent International*, Canada, August 16-31, 1982).

Perhaps Siddiqui lives in a world of his own, away from the harsh realities. His scheme can, at best, be described as a 'vision run riot'. When even two nations like Egypt and Libya, or Iraq and Syria could

not combine despite ideological affinity and repeated efforts, how can nations lacking any cohesion, and at logger-heads, ideologically combine into such a colossal regional union of States. Many of the States like Iran and Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, which Siddiqui proposes to weld together are at war with each other and are deeply divided by race and tribe, apart from unbridgeable ideological differences.

Siddiqui is so overwhelmed by the sense of Islamic unity in its ideological sense that he, at one stroke, sweeps away all other dividing factors altogether. Even if there is ideological cohesion and a common political vision, the fact of imbalance in economic development itself would rend nations apart. What if, apart from economic imbalance, there are cultural, linguistic, ideological and political differences? In such an event, let alone unity, even co-existence would be difficult to achieve.

No Arab country, however rich in its oil resources, views with equanimity the prospects of Muslims from other countries settling down and sharing their riches. There also has been controversy about the Arabs and Non-Arabs. The Ikhwanul-Muslimin, a counterpart of the Jamaat-i-Islami in the Arab world, stands for Islamic internationalism and rejects the concept of the Arab nationhood propounded by the Egyptian leader, Gamal Abd al-Nasir. However, the Ikhwan view had failed to evoke emotional appeal in the Arab world. It remains an ideological position of a fringe-group.

The confrontation between Arab nationalism and Islamic internationalism has been a predominant feature throughout the Arab world, including Saudi Arabia which provides leadership to the conservative Arab regimes. The Arabs themselves are divided into many nation-States and have, among themselves, sharp internal contradictions. Arab nationalism acquires overwhelming force, transcending nation-State barriers, only during a period of grave general crisis. Here too the intra-State contradictions some-

times are so intense that even a grave crisis fails to generate any powerful ethos of Arab nationalism. This was witnessed very well during the Israeli aggression over Lebanon. When the Palestinians were being massacred in Lebanon, the Arab world was witnessing the gory drama in silence as the different Arab countries could not resolve their mutual differences.

The nation-State remains, at least in the present era, a firmly rooted reality. Islamic internationalism, at best, has remained an ideological position of certain groups in the Islamic world. This ideological position is completely at logger-heads with the empirical reality. The Iraq-Iran war is another evidence of this, if any more evidence is needed. Saddam Husain of Iraq had initially thought that with the Arab armies marching into Iran, the Arabs of Khuzistan (an oil-rich province in Iran) would rise in revolt, a wish which remained unfulfilled.

Also, Khomeini, since he came to power has been giving stirring calls to the Shi'as of Iraq (of course the appeal is not directed explicitly to the Shi'as but the implication is for anyone to see) to revolt against the Saddam regime, a wish that did not materialise even after the Iranian army entered the region of Basra which is predominantly inhabited by the Shi'as. In both the cases national interests, if not powerful national feelings, had the better of Islamic feelings or sectarian solidarity.

I am not saying that the concept of the nation-State is an ultimate of human progress in the field of politics. Far from it. I am only trying to say that while upholding an ideological position, one cannot ignore empirical reality which is a product of certain socio-economic forces. The socio-economic forces have had their way throughout the history of Islam and the vision of a unified *ummah*, except for a brief period, could never be realised. The political unity of *ummah* was shattered for ever after the decline of the Abbasid empire. The nation-States of our time would begin to decline, if at all, not because of Islam but despite it.

Towards an Islamic society

GODFREY JANSEN

GETTING on for half the Moslems in the world, 330m out of 750m, live in the four Moslem countries of south-east Asia and south Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Outsiders see these governments as stalwartly, even militantly, Islamic. Local militants see them otherwise. They argue that the governments are fearful of Islamic militancy because it is the force most likely to overturn them. The regimes cannot fight the militants openly so they fight them by trying to outbid them. Thus many Moslems are subjected to the distorting process of being opposed in their beliefs and practices by governments claiming to be very Islamic indeed.

There are three layers of Islam in these countries: first, the administrative Islam of the rulers; second, the orthodox Islam of the ulemas (theologians) and traditionalists; third, the militant, reformist Islam of devout laymen, most of whom, though by no means all, are young.

*Reproduced from *The Economist*, September 4, 1982.

In theory, the orthodox and the militants have the joint aim of establishing an Islamic society leading to an Islamic State; in practice, the orthodox often collude with government to suppress the militants.

The first layer, bureaucratic Islam, comprises the ministries of religion or religious affairs, plus a plethora of official and semi-official ecclesiastical organisations. In the second layer are such orthodox groups as the Nahdatul Ulema in Indonesia; the Islamic party or PAS in Malaysia; a section of the Moslem League and two ulema organisations in Pakistan; three fragments of the Moslem League and one section of the Islamic Democratic League in Bangladesh.

In the third layer, militant Islam is represented in Indonesia by the old Masjumi party (now under a different name), still led in vigorous old age by Muhammed Natsir; by a group of young men and women associated with the Salman mosque

attached to Bandung's technological university; by university and school associations; by the large-scale Muhammadiyah educational organisation, and by a loose confederation of mosque youth clubs. In Malaysia there is the youth movement Abim led by Anwar Ibrahim and the young wing of PAS. In Pakistan and Bangladesh there is the Jamaat-i-Islami, which used to be one movement under the late Maulana Maududi and now functions separately in the two countries — though mainly underground in the hostile environment of Bangladesh. The Jamaat in both Pakistan and Bangladesh are as political as they are allowed to be.

In fundamental Islam there is no separation between religion and politics: a truly devout Moslem politician is committed to work ultimately for an Islamic State, with an Islamic society as the first step. In Indonesia and Malaysia, the rulers have said officially that religion and politics must be kept apart. Yet a clause in the Bangladesh constitution says that faith in Allah 'shall be the basis of all actions.'

General Zia ul Haq has gone a lot further than this in Pakistan by implementing some fundamental Islamic reforms. But, in the eyes of the reformists in the new militant movement, the autocratic nature of his power deprives him of Islamic legitimacy. It is fundamental to the pure theory of Islamic politics that there should be consent, consultation and consensus. Hence hereditary monarchy and autocracy, civil or military, are both anathema to Islamic purists — even though, throughout Islamic history, these have been the usual forms of government.

Unable and unwilling to come to terms with the basic demands of militant Islam, these Moslem governments resort both to repression and to out-bidding. It is in Indonesia, the world's largest Moslem State, that the militants are most on the defensive, fighting back a very strong, multi-sided governmental attack. One of the most effective tactics used in Indonesia has been simply to reduce the official count of Moslems. Indonesia is

generally reckoned to be 90% Moslem but this percentage is lowered by fudging the census: if the average illiterate Moslem does not answer 'yes' to the loaded question 'Can you read the Koran?' he or she is classified as non-Moslem.

The four Indonesian Moslem parties have been herded together into a single party called the United Development party. In the past three elections, this party was prohibited from promoting religious issues, thus depriving it of its special electoral appeal. The electoral lists were purged, the candidates were screened (a third being rejected in 1971) and the voting and counting process was tampered with. Given these impediments, the Moslem alliance did well to win 96 seats out of 460 at both the 1977 election and at the last election in May, 1982, although in 1982 they lost the capital to the government.

A third Indonesian tactic is the official support given to other religions so that they serve as a counterweight to Islam. Apart from the elaborately structured and widely propagated secular cult of Pancasila, Indonesia's mysterious official ideology, Buddhism has been resurrected and the gentle, exotic Hinduism of Bali has been given its political organisation. The government also promotes a Javanese cult called Kebatinan, a strange amalgam of animism, mysticism and necromancy, which is said to be the personal faith of President Suharto and several of his senior generals — in addition, naturally, to their adherence to Islam.

It is the Christians who have benefited most from official patronage. The number of churches has quadrupled, and the number of Christians has doubled, in the past 20 years (many of these converts are believed to be ex-communists who changed colour after the 1965 massacres to escape persecution). Christian missionaries now have a network of their own private airstrips covering Indonesia, 41 in one province alone. Suharto uses his Christian minority in rather the same way as the late Shah of Iran used his religious minorities to fill posts

in Iran's intelligence services: Christians now have such jobs as deputy chief of staff of the armed forces, head of defence intelligence and co-ordinating minister of politics and security. As a result, the old goodwill between Christian and Moslem in Indonesia is disappearing; the Christians risk the same grim fate as the Bahais in Iran should official protection be withdrawn after a change of regime.

The Islamic contest in Malaysia is neither as deliberate nor as comprehensive as in Indonesia, though there are some similarities. Just as Indonesian civil servants and military officers are indoctrinated in Pancasila, so in Malaysia they are given courses in the official ideology, Rukunegara, as well as in the official brand of Islam. The management of Islam in Malaysia is in the personal charge of the princely rulers of the federation's various states, thus making it the nearest thing in the Islamic world to an established church led by crowned heads.

In politics, there is a straight unequal fight between the official United Malays National Organisation (Umno) and PAS, the orthodox Islamic party. There are so many restrictions on any kind of political activity in Malaysia — for instance, no open-air meetings are allowed unless they are addressed by a minister — that the youth movement, Abim, remains strictly extra-political. Even so, its activities are curbed. Students are not allowed to join it, permits for its meetings and seminars are often refused, its monthly magazine is not allowed on general sale. The movement's leader, Anwar Ibrahim, was jailed without trial for two years; civil servants and teachers who are Abim office-holders find themselves demoted. Despite these restrictions, there are still calls for the banning of Abim — and for the banning of the reformist Aliran group, based in Penang, which admits that its membership consists of 55 intellectuals.

The governments of all four countries — Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh — seem to have come to the conclusion, perhaps

after the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979, that the annual Haj pilgrimage could provide the breeding ground for dangerously radical ideas. Thus, by making it rather difficult, these Moslem governments appear to be trying to restrict the number of people who go on the Haj, one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Pakistan and Bangladesh can plead shortage of foreign currency but that excuse does not apply to either Indonesia or Malaysia. In Indonesia the fee for going on the Haj has been raised, exorbitant air fares are charged, and pilgrims are further deterred by hardships caused by mismanagement (and corruption) at the ministry of religions.

Another exercise in discipline in all four countries is that the sermons in the mosques for the important Friday service are under official scrutiny and control. On most Fridays, and on all important religious occasions, the text or guidelines of the sermons are delivered to the imams (prayer leaders) by the religious ministries. One of the provisions in the Islamic Co-operation Agreement, signed by Indonesia and Malaysia in December, 1980, was a pledge to counter 'negative Islamic influences.'

There are also patterns to the ways in which official Islam tries to outbid militant Islam. The most obvious way is the building of ever more mosques, quite often financed by Saudi Arabia or Libya (the militants tend to regard Saudi Arabia with tolerant scorn and to declare Libya's Islamic revolution, so far as they can understand it, to be shallow and foolish). In 1967, Malaysia had 2,000 mosques, one mosque for every 3,000 Moslems; over the next 10 years it built another 2,000, most of them from public funds, even though Moslems number barely half the federation's population. Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh both claim that they will have the largest Islamic complexes in south-east Asia. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, too, the building of unnecessary mosques is a prime activity of official Islam; the new mosque in Islamabad has the highest minarets in the world.

Another hallmark of official Islam is the concentration on Islam's outward manifestations: the heavy projection of Islam on radio and television, the onslaught on drink, drugs and pop groups, the advocacy of long dresses for girls and their separation from boys in schools. Both Indonesia and Malaysia are spending heavily on competitions for reciting the Koran — in Arabic, which almost nobody there understands.

Typical, too, of official Islam is the support given to *dawah* (or *dakwah* in south-east Asia), which is the missionary work of conversion. Paid for by Saudi Arabia and Libya, the headquarters building of Perkim, a *dakwah* organisation, is just about the tallest building in Kuala Lumpur; the organisation claims to have made up to 160,000 converts, some of them Malaysia's shrewd Chinese, who sense which way the wind is blowing.

A much more worthwhile activity of official Islam is the collection of taxes and tithes, *zakat* on money and *ushr* on landed property. In Malaysia it is *ushr* that is mostly collected, because the peasants are politically weak and the moneyed are politically strong. In Pakistan it is the other way around because the landlords and the peasants provide the officers and the soldiers who keep the regime in power.

The collection and distribution of the *zakat* fund is one of the redeeming features of General Zia's drive for Islamicisation in Pakistan. Under a formidably efficient administrator (in the old Indian civil service mould) money is collected and then distributed to the needy through a decentralised structure of 32,000 *zakat* committees, whose members are chosen, through consensus, at the village or neighbourhood level. The *zakat* collected compulsorily at source from the bank accounts of Moslem businessmen and officials is one reason why the Zia regime is unpopular among better-off Pakistanis.

Another good example of official Islam in action is the work of the Islamic Foundation in Dacca. This

is run by Shamsul Alam, a professional bureaucrat who says 'I am only an administrator' but who is well on the way to becoming Bangladesh's 'Mr Islam'. Centred in the huge Beit el Makarem mosque, a grey cement monstrosity that is easily the ugliest big mosque in any Moslem country, the foundation has been brought back to life by Shamsul Alam in the past two years.

His most interesting venture, probably unique in the Islamic world, is taking imams from the villages, where they are the embodiment of stultifying conservatism, and turning them into the Moslem equivalent of worker-priests. Already more than 1,000 imams have gone through a 45-day crash course on such diverse subjects as village administration, first-aid, including a five-hour maternity course, fertilisers and insecticides, fishery and crop rotation. The target is to train 100,000 imams as community leaders.

The fact that Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Bangladesh are taking the challenge of militant Islam seriously enough to try to contain it or outbid it is evidence that the challenge is a serious-minded one. With astonishing unanimity, because the contacts between them are not particularly close or continuous, the various reformist movements have all arrived at the same diagnosis and cure. 'Do not talk to us about the Islamic State', they say, 'that is only a far-distant goal'. Their analysis is that the older Islamic parties, the Masjumi in Indonesia, PAS in Malaysia, the Moslem League in Pakistan and the Moslem Brotherhood in the Arab world, all failed because they tried to take a political short-cut to the Islamic State. They tried to achieve power through political parties, manifestoes or elections; when these methods failed, they turned to violence.

The new objective is not an Islamic State but an Islamic society, to be achieved through a slow transformation, through education and missionary endeavour, to convert Moslems into good Moslems (a good Moslem is one who, in particular, does not succumb to such evils of 'modern life' as corruption

and consumerism). When there are enough good Moslems in a society, that society will inevitably become an Islamic society. If that Islamic society establishes itself and endures then, no less inevitably, it will produce an Islamic State. And how long will this take? At least a generation, perhaps two, is the answer from these young men plus a disappointingly few young women. These young people, in their twenties and thirties, are dedicated, even fanatical, but not yet in a hurry.

Westerners tend to dismiss the overall plan of radical Moslems as simplistic, even simple-minded; society, they say, no longer works that way. Perhaps it can in societies where religion is still a living force, as it is in Moslem societies.

By appearing to eschew the political option, the reformists make themselves largely invulnerable. Not even the most hostile 'Moslem' government, as in Indonesia, can curb their well-established and large-scale educational, social and cultural activities. These activities are impressive. In Indonesia, for instance, Masjumi runs four full universities, plus medical and engineering faculties. The Muhammadiyah, for long non-political but now made militant by official antagonism, runs 12,000 schools. The largest university student organisation, HMI, is Islamic and has 140,000 members being trained in politics, community development and leadership. The organisation of school students, PEI, is even larger, more Islamic and more militant.

In Malaysia naturally everything is on a smaller scale: Abim has 40,000 members in 86 branches plus 15,000 student sympathisers; it manages seven high schools and at weekends runs village clinics staffed by doctor members. The Jamaat in Bangladesh claims to have 100,000 offices with 50,000 members in its youth wing alone; it has several primary and elementary schools and some secondary ones; it has a couple of social centres and clinics in Dacca. The much older Jamaat in Pakistan is very active. Claiming 1m members, it runs more than 50 schools, while 'millions' are treated

every year in its clinics and mobile dispensaries; 20,000 students at any one time benefit from its help with textbooks and fees.

It is not this do-gooding that makes these organisations Islamic. The task of making 'good Moslems' goes on in the small meetings in which a dozen or so members come together for study, discussion and worship. For the Masjumi and the two Jamaat organisations these meetings are weekly; for Abim at least once a fortnight. In Pakistan, the Jamaat says it has 3,000 of its basic units, 'the circles of associates', in Karachi alone. In Bangladesh full members of the Jamaat have to answer a somewhat frightening 10-column questionnaire on what they have done each day.

The largest and least-known religious movement in the Moslem world today is the Tabligh (Revival) movement which, though it is itself non-militant, provides the militants in Pakistan and Bangladesh with a solid foundation of revivalist Islam. It was started in Delhi around 1945 and developed into the Islamic equivalent of Moral Rearmament. Its aim is to produce good Moslems, born-again Moslems. A good Moslem must give an hour a day, or one day a week, or three days a month, or four weeks a year or four months in a lifetime to personal missionary work, mainly house-to-house visits. The Tabligh movement has no regular offices, no organisational structure, not even a fixed membership. Yet it has attracted to its ranks every sort of Moslem, from university professors to peasants. In the three days of its annual assembly in Tongi, a small town near Dacca, it draws together 5m people; the Haj at Mecca attracts 2m people in a year. Tabligh, has spread its activity to every country in which Moslems live.

Although, at present, the Islamic reformist groups in south and south-east Asia mostly shy away from politics or any talk of the Islamic State, they are bound to become enmeshed in politics one of these days. Then it will be seen whether, as good Moslems, they can give their countries good government.

Books

MARXISM AND THE MUSLIM WORLD by
Maxime Rodinson. Translated by Michael Pallis,
New Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1980.

ISLAM AND CAPITALISM by Maxime Rodinson.
Translated by Brian Peace. Harmondsworth:
Penguin, 1977.

THIS pair of books presents a selection of writing and lectures of an eminent French Marxist scholar of the Arabo-Islamic world. Originally appearing in French between 1958 and 1972, these pieces invited much criticism from followers of Weber, liberal sociologists and militant Marxists.

The Weberians flayed Rodinson for refuting Weber's thesis of the rise of modern capitalism as a reflection of European rationality. Rodinson holds the Quran to be more rational than the Old and

New Testaments. He brooks no encroachment of history on the virgin territory of what he calls the core or essentials of Islam. In this he is close to idealistic Muslim apologists.

Liberal sociologists criticised him for limiting his discussions in a narrow economicistic frame. That is, the visible centre of Rodinson's argument is to present Islamic attempts to escape backwardness through a series of modifications in economy, an *aggiornamento* of economy, rather than a *risorgimento*, an overall resurgence and reorganization of which economic modernization is only a part. The militant Marxists were outraged by his disavowal of a puritan line of class war, panstructuralism, and non-developmental results of the Asiatic mode of production.

Be that as it may, Rodinson seems to be much misunderstood as an orientalist. He does not reject

Weber in totality. He is only asserting that being the co-sharers of the same Semitic-Hellenic inheritances, Arab Muslims are as rational or irrational as their Judaco-Christian brethren across the Mediterranean. Though Rodinson lays greater emphasis on the economic factors in the diagnosis and prognosis of the Arabo-Islamic situation, he is not naive to wholly overlook the social and cultural determinants. However, he revels in Marxist heresy.

Marxist by conviction and descent, he is torn between his Marxian sociology and the existential realities in the Arabo-Islamic world. To reach *concordat* and synthesis with Muslim specificity, he is forced to reduce his Marxism to the extent that it becomes merely a groping for communalities between Marxism and Islam, namely, egalitarianism, lack of hierarchy, universalism, creative optimism, humanism, and what have you at such a level of abstraction.

The central thrust of Rodinson's argument is that the dominant development paradigm of technologically induced growth is given and the road to that development lies either through communist or capitalist paths. For the third world, including the Arabo-Islamic world, there is no third way. Since the paradigm is western in origin and in conception, it is alienative. The alienative features cannot be eliminated but its rigours can be minimised. Since all human groups are in constant evolution, the hope lies in constituted ideologies, rather, ideological syntheses that have ideational springs in capitalism or communism without deviating much from the socio-cultural mainsprings of the natives. He views Islam as an epiphenomenon, similar to an ideology, that may be used to serve all kinds of political projects and apparatus. No wonder, we have versions of Islam *a la* Khomeini, Qaddafi, Zia, Khalid, et.al.

Orientalists rely too heavily on texts and the orientals on contexts. It goes to the credit of Rodinson that he is equally at home with the texts and contexts. That explains his sensitivity to Islamic traditions and the reason why he evokes a sympathetic chord in the Frenchified Arabo-Islamic world. His Marxism, too, is tolerant, democratic and positive, promising a secular salvation. Despite their rambling and discursive style, these two books are more readable and pertinent than, say, Edward Said's *Orientalism* that mainly stresses the primordial role of Islam or Samir Amin's *Arab Nation: Nationalism and Class Struggle* that rejects Euro-centric Marxism, denies any role to Islam in a future revolution, but sees a future for the distinctively nationalist Marxism of the Arabs.

Rodinson, so well aware of the texts and contexts, forgets that Marxism and capitalism are full blown ideologies, while Islam is a full blown theology, not epiphenomenal but a totalising one. It is true that all three have their orthodoxies, heterodoxies and variations thereof. Nevertheless, Capitalism and Marxism owe total allegiance to the predictive power of natural science and are totally committed to a technologically induced development. Islam, though,

never anti-materialistic except on the fringes, has transcendent values, and is not amenable to reconciliation on fundamentals, as Rodinson, Roger Garaudy, Samir Amin, Edward Said, Bryan Turner, Peter Gran and a whole lot of new orientalists would fondly like it to be, by de-emphasising the obstacles and down-playing the contradictions.

R.K. Srivastava

THE BOHRAS by Asghar Ali Engineer. New Delhi,
Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1980.

IN *The Bohras* the author outlines the genesis of the Shia Ismaili sect in Islam, its history through the centuries and its transformation into the Dawoodi Bohra community of India. The book is important because it is the first detailed account of the religious and historical background of this community which analyses the emergent conflict between the priests and the reformists within the Bohra social organisation. The only other book in English on the Dawoodi Bohras was written in 1920 by Mian Bhai Mulla Abdul Hussain. The latter was a short account and meant as a supplement to an article on the Bohras in the *Ethnographic Survey of the Central Provinces*. The author, a Bohra himself, imparts a double flavour to the book — the rigour of the scholar and the reformist zeal of the social worker.

After its rise in Arabia, Islam spread to many other parts of the world as culturally diverse as Africa and Persia. Almost a natural consequence of this was the assimilation of social and cultural factors specific in each region into the dogmatics and practice of Islam. As dissent was expressed in the political idiom, struggles for power gave birth to new sects. The first and the biggest break was on the question of succession to the Prophet and then did the division into Sunnis and Shias take place.

This is important as the origins of the Ismaili movement lie in this historical split. Shias were mainly Persian slaves captured during the wars. Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law became a victim of Umayyad conspiracy and his two sons Hasan and Husain were killed by the founders of this dynasty. The slaves hated the Umayyads and Ali's personality appealed to them. Further, the principle of succession (the Persians had monarchy) of Imams appealed to them far more than the principle of election which was an Arab tradition. For the Shias, therefore, sovereignty has a heritable attribute. Since Mohammad did not leave behind any sons, they felt the natural successor should be Ali, his son-in-law. As a result, the three caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar and Usman became usurpers and objects of Shia wrath.

The Shia hatred for their rich Arab masters was intensified by the fact that Arabs treated them like serfs and second rate citizens. After Imam Husain's martyrdom; Mukhtar, an Arab himself, led the first

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rebellion of the non-Arab *mawalis* against the Umayyads. After this was successfully crushed by the latter, the leaders of the movement came to the conclusion that failure was due to lack of a proper organisational base. They established a secret network of *dais* (propagandists) throughout the empire to canvass support for the House of Alids. The identity of the leader in whose name the propaganda was carried out was kept a closely guarded secret.

Another group in the opposition were the Abbasids, who similarly organised an underground secret network. With cunning, the Abbasids were able to get the support of the Alids and overthrow the Umayyads. Once in power, they systematically persecuted the Alids in order to liquidate opposition. During the course of the Abbasid revolution, the Shiites had split into many sects and sub-sects — the Ismailiya sect was one of these (the precursors of the Bohras of India). This sect was most successful in effectively challenging the Abbasids and finally establishing its own state, known as the Fatimid State in the history of the Arabs.

The Shii movement, which was a unified one till the death of Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq, split into two major groups — the *Ithua Asharis* (those who accepted Imam's younger son, Musa Kazim, as the next in line) and the *Ismailis* (those who accepted Ismail, the elder son, as the next Imam). In order to maintain strict secrecy regarding the identity of the Imam, different assumed names were given to him, as also other persons were set up, called *hujub* (veils), to mislead the Abbasid leaders and their intelligence network. To quote Engineer, 'It was during this period that the movement took a decisive shape and evolved a fool-proof structure so vitally needed for its underground functioning. This structure continues till today ...' (pp. 17).

Having examined the origins of the Ismaili movement the author lists several case histories, illustrating the persecution of the Bohras by the priestly class. Among the atrocities heaped on the reformists he lists physical assault, denial of burial, forced marriages and divorces, attacks on business, besides the successful technique of social boycott by the community.

There are two appendices at the end of the book — (1) Memorandum of the central Board of Dawoodi Bohra community, submitted to the Nathwani Commission, which briefly lists the case for the reformists; and (2) Recommendations of the Nathwani Commission, which establish the infringement of civil liberties and human rights of the reformists by the priestly class, and call for State intervention in taking suitable legislative measures.

The history of the reform movement dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. It is interesting to see the roots of this movement which lay in the dissemination of modern education within the community. The priestly family opposed this tooth and nail in a keenly fought legal battle. There fol-

lowed the ex-communication of all those who were in any way associated with the case. One is forced to the conclusion that suppression of democratic rights is not the sole preserve of repressive political regimes. Powerful religious establishments, commanding both monetary and non-monetary resources in fantastic proportion, can buy political patronage, thereby ensuring a free-play of their will in internal matters of the community.

After the publication of the Nathwani Commission report, the national press gave a wide coverage to the reform movement. The reformists recently held their third all-world conference in Bombay (February 6-8) which was sought to be disrupted by the conformist Bohras at the behest of the priestly family. So, where, on the one hand, the number of people within and outside the community who support the cause of the reformists is increasing, on the other, so also is the repression and pressure tactics. The results are yet to be seen, but it is hard to visualise any serious dent in the stranglehold of the high priest over the lives of the community members until and unless legislation banning the practice of social boycott, etc., are enacted.

The author imparts to the first part of the book, the rigour of the scholar, whereas the second part is more polemical. This, however, is not to say that it is not convincing — in fact, the author puts forward a very strong case for the reformists. It would have been better, though, if he had dealt with the two separately in different books.

Also, the author could have compiled a list of opinions of a cross-section of the Bohra Community about the priestly class instead of concentrating only on the persecuted minority. Besides giving a more balanced picture, this would have brought out the kind of constraints on those who cannot support the movement and the reasons of those who do not. At one place he does mention a few positive features of this kind of totalitarian organisation — for instance, divorce rate is low and the family is a more viable unit because community ties are very strong and the priestly family which frowns on divorce is greatly feared. Perhaps, the majority of the Bohras feel that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and therefore prefer this system. This should have been more thoroughly investigated.

Secondly, and more importantly, as the Bohras are mainly traders, there is an ethos of conformity as they stand to gain from the old set-up and lose out if they are non-conformist. Had the majority been professionals, the picture might have been quite different. This could be a topic of detailed study. Inherent barriers to social and cultural change can be discerned from the little Asghar Ali Engineer has written on this.

Overall, it is a highly readable book and a welcome one, as there is such paucity of literature in English on the Bohras.

Aditi Desai

THE BENGAL MUSLIMS 1871-1906 : A Quest for Identity by Rafiuddin Ahmed. Oxford University Press, 1981.

Rafiuddin Ahmed's The Bengal Muslims 1871-1906: A Quest for Identity attempts a major departure from the usual run of books on Muslim politics in the sub-continent. A kind of 'history from below' has emerged in recent writings on the Indian national movement, emphasising popular and, particularly, peasant initiatives rather than the ideology or factional intrigues of political leaders. Studies of Muslim separatist awareness and politics, however, still concentrate in the main on urban politicians, presented as leading a justified movement of a 'backward' and presumably homogeneous 'nation', falling into the British 'divide and rule' trap, or responding to constitutional-cum-administrative opportunities and pressures.

Such conflicting interpretations, like broadly similar approaches to Indian nationalism, clearly still share a common elite focus. A few studies of communal riots have attempted to probe into deeper socio-economic dimensions, but there has been little analysis so far of more long-term structures of popular feeling and ideology building up into a sense of distinct identity among the Muslim peasantry of Bengal. It is this that Dr. Ahmed has tried to explore, and the value of his pioneer attempt is greatly enhanced by the use of a kind of source-material virtually untapped so far: popular religious tracts or *puthis* in Bengali, the *nasihat-namahs* (manuals of religious instruction), over a hundred of which he lists in his bibliography. Excellent use has been made also of some little known autobiographies, particularly Ibn Maazuddin Ahmad's *Amar Sansar Jivan*.

Dr. Ahmed begins with an important discussion of the stratification of 19th century Bengali Muslim society (Chapter I). These broad categories are distinguished within the *ashraf*: the Urdu-speaking urban elite (studied recently by Kenneth Macpherson), the bilingual *mofussil* gentry, and the Bengali-speaking lesser *ashraf* (p. 13). The study of the *atrap* masses highlights interesting points of similarity as well as contrast with caste-based Hindu society. The divisions into service-cum-craft groups appear very similar to Hindu *jatis*, but there was also a greater possibility of upward mobility, as revealed by the emergence of a very broadbased cultivating *Sheikh* category — a relative flexibility summed up in the saying: 'last year I was a *Jolaha*, this year I am a *Sheikh*, next year if prices rise I shall be a *Syed*' (p. 21). There is valuable discussion also of the significant role of the village *mullah*, 'perhaps the only people who could, and later did, play an effective role in bridging the gap between the different segments of the Muslim population, and mobilise the masses ...' (p. 27).

The core of Dr. Ahmed's thesis is a study of the profound changes in late 19th century rural Muslim

society brought about by the sustained bid at 'Islamization' of a community which for centuries had shared innumerable beliefs, customs and mores with their Hindu neighbours. Both fundamentalist reforms of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiya*, *Faraizi*, or *Taiyuni* sects, and their orthodox rivals, contributed to such efforts, and, indeed, by the last decades of the 19th century the relations between fundamentalists and traditionalists were shifting from 'confrontation to consensus' (Chapter III). While the broad outlines of these developments are well-known, the originality of Dr. Ahmed lies in the data he has unearthed about the communications media and institutions through which such processes penetrated village society in Bengal.

Chapter III, the most valuable section of the book, analyses the public religious debates (*bahas*) between the *Faraizi* and the less extreme *Taiyuni* followers of Kéramat Ali Jaunpuri which became real social occasions in the Bengal countryside, gives fascinating details about the changing style and content of the *nasihat-namahs*, and chronicles the efforts at Islamization of the rural masses by popular leaders like Munshi Meherulla through *wiz mahfils* (religious assemblies). The net impact was a growing insistence on separate identity well before the emergence of conscious communal politics. There were bitter attacks on syncretist customs, participation in Hindu festivals, and joint veneration of *pirs*, attempts (not very successful) to promote Urdu, and the development in later popular tracts of a 'curious hybrid called Musalmani or Islami Bengali...in sharp contrast to the *nasihat namahs* of an earlier epoch, whose mode of expression was generally as 'Bengali' as the work of any contemporary Hindu author' (p. 91). Such trends towards a separate identity, Dr. Ahmed argues, really preceded by several decades the conflicts at the elite level over educational opportunities, jobs, and political favours — the much more familiar story which he has chronicled, with less originality, in the last two chapters of his book.

But, the really serious criticism concerns the question as to whether Dr. Ahmed could not have utilised better the new materials he has unearthed with such diligence to tackle two related problems which he raises repeatedly but does not really solve. He has no doubt at all that there was something unnatural and flimsy about the denial of more fundamental regional roots in the name of an Islamic identity. The 'enforced solidarity' could not last, and after 1947 there was a quick 'reassertion of regional identity and the consequent break-up of Pakistan' (p. 190). But the book does not fully answer what is posed in the *Preface* as the central problem: the massive, though short-lived, 'popular responses to an elitist political movement from which the common man had little to gain' (p. xii). We are left with the impression of something like a conjuring trick by the *mullahs* worked through the *nasihat-namahs*. In the second place, since the focus throughout is on source-material with a separatist content, Dr. Ahmed's repeated assertions of the validity and indeed deeper roots of the regional, non-communal

alternative remains in a vacuum, for it is not backed up by much concrete evidence regarding the existence or viability of this alternative in his own time-period.

One might tentatively suggest that the first problem could have been tackled more adequately through a deeper study of agrarian relations along with an exploration of possible socio-economic implications of some of the *nasihat-namahs*. Like virtually everyone writing on East Bengal, Dr. Ahmed points to the obvious coincidence of class and communal divisions through the Hindu zamindar-trader and Muslim-peasant syndrome, but this remains a mere conventional assertion, without new data or very much concreteness.

The one new point made by Dr. Ahmed in this context — the relative weakness of Muslim intermediate tenure-holders as compared to the Hindu *bhadralok* (pp 24-25) — had probably more ambiguous consequences than he mentions. If this weakness delayed the formation of a Muslim political elite with roots in the countryside, as he argues, it possibly contributed later also to the adoption of more demagogically radical postures on agrarian questions. Hindu nationalists in contrast were inhibited by the widespread *bhadralok* combination of professions with tenure-holding incomes. Some case-studies of agrarian disputes feeding communal tensions would have strengthened the argument here.

A more perceptive analysis of the social philosophy implicit in the *nasihat-namahs* would have been even more relevant. It is clear from Dr. Ahmed's account that some of these tracts, like the very influential *Bedar-al-Ghaflin*, combined purely religious dictates with 'a complete *vade-mecum* of the *vita-Islamica*' (p.90). But except for some interesting passages concerning women (p.89), such dimensions are left largely unexplored.

In one tract of this kind which I have had the occasion to see, the 112 page poem *Krishak Bandhu* of 1910 (Dr. Ahmed does not mention this, possibly because it falls a little outside his period), appeals to strictly follow the Koran, pay *zakat* to *mullahas*, and reject the false prophets of syncretism; all this is combined in a fascinating manner with a detailed listing of peasant woes and a call for something like a rich peasant programme.. There were references to new techniques and improved seeds, wells and canals (citing the Punjab example), appeals to Muslim peasants to colonize virgin lands in Sylhet, Cachar and Assam, and advice to combine farming with trade — though the rich peasant is piously exhorted not to turn exploiter and usurer himself. One would like to know very much whether there were any anticipations of all this in earlier *nasihat-namahs*.

As for the existence of a non-communal, regional alternative, Dr. Ahmed could have strengthened his argument by giving more data about the survival, despite repeated fundamentalist onslaughts, of popular syncretist elements, in the rural culture of Bengal

— a point he occasionally mentions but does not elaborate. The coexistence, in varying proportions, of an anti-British with anti-Hindu temper in the ideology, not only of the earlier fundamentalists but also of later Pan-Islamism should also have been explored.

And if class tensions all too often flowed into communalist channels, there were also surely some objective bases for united action. It is curious that an account of Bengal Muslims from the 1870s focussing on the countryside totally ignores the Pabna agrarian struggle of 1873, waged by predominantly Muslim but also some Hindu tenants against Hindu zamindars on a non-communal basis. The point very interestingly made by the nationalist journal *Mussalman* on 4 October, 1907 is not really developed by the author: 'The great interest of the six castes (i.e. Brahmins, Kayasthas, Baidyas and their Muslim counterparts — Syeds, Mughals, Pathans) is to get into government service; the great interest of the cultivators is to have salt free and chaukidari tax off and to secure their tenancies' (p. 162).

Precisely the staples, one must note, of much later nationalist and agrarian agitation, and if consistent united action on such themes could not develop a strength sufficient to avert the tragedy of 1947, the responsibility lay not with Islamic separatists alone, but as much, if not more, with the social inhibitions of the Congress in Bengal.

Sumit Sarkar

AMONG THE BELIEVERS: AN ISLAMIC JOURNEY by V.S. Naipaul. Penguin Books
1982.

DURING the winter of the Iranian revolution, V.S. Naipaul was in Connecticut, watching the incidents in Iran and interviews with America-based Iranians on television. Those interviewed spoke of the greatness of Islam, and expressed the hope that Iran would become a truly Islamic country. Their faith in the 'beauty of Islamic law' intrigued Naipaul so much that he decided to travel in search of people who would tell him more about the faith. His journey took him to Iran, Pakistan, and Indonesia. It is not clear why he chose these four, or why he did not think of including an African country. But surely travellers have a million reasons for going where they go; and the choice of at least one of his countries, Iran, needs no justification. Where else would you go to make sense of an idea if not where the idea had turned an iron State apparatus upside down.

Clearly, Naipaul believed that at the root of the Iranian revolution was an idea — faith in Islam. A belief, I suppose, is necessary for a traveller who is not simply travelling but is in quest of something he knows exists. If ten other routes of explanation bug him, that is if his mind is not already settled about why something happened, he cannot focus on his

quest. He winks at the suggestion many have made that in many countries Islam has given the underdog a means to fight against mighty adversaries.

Naipaul was in quest of the human roots of Islamic 'fundamentalism' — the word brevity-loving western media toss up the moment they hear of people uniting under a religious banner. Naipaul wanted to know the people who believed that Islamic laws, economy, politics, and education would deliver what colonial and neo-colonial systems of supply had failed to deliver. Also, he wanted to understand Islamic law, economy, and polity himself. But more than anything else, it seems, he wanted to verify his scepticism to the idea of an Islamic revolution. So he started his journey in Iran.

Naipaul's data were people—mostly ordinary people. He saw them, talked to them, met their friends, ate with them, accompanied them to places they wanted to show him. He read what they suggested, especially when they gave him the books they thought would help him, or letters. It is obvious that Naipaul's data are very human. He offers you the feel of first hand knowledge, something few journalists and no academics can offer. He writes with a sense of drama, aware of his own part.

Sometimes his self-awareness reaches the proportions of the touchiness of a handicapped schoolboy. Before talking to Khalkhalli ('Khomeini received and preached and blessed; Khalkhalli hanged') he was worried about what nationality he should divulge: 'England would be truest, but would be misleading. Trinidad would be mystifying, and equally misleading. South America was a possibility but the associations were wrong.'

When Naipaul talks like this about his greenroom dressing, he comes off a dear little fellow. His journey, far from soaking you in the sweat of horror that Swedish newspaper cartoons on Khomeini can give you, makes you laugh though there is no one around. He is a master of understatement, and a thorough entertainer. He is a quiet, funny reporter of humanity. But is he reliable?

His yardstick is the West. His belief in science, technology, liberal democracy, development, private economy, and the secular State is obvious. What is not so obvious is his assumption that these are all linked. No wonder that some of his pet observations — funny, striking the first time — recur to the point of boredom. How many times can you be impressed by the contradiction between the anti-modern religiosity of a mullah and the ease with which he lifts up his telephone receiver? Or by the contradiction between the rejection of the West's ethics and the desire to somehow emigrate there? Or between the lack of individual freedom in a Third World country and the reference to it by tired emigrants of that country facing harassment at some western airport? Naipaul gets so obsessed with these that he

forgets the context and overlooks history. He tells his readers that he cannot make sense of the world he had gone out to find. And he is right.

His western yardstick fails to impress in many other contexts, sometimes showing a belief in western superiority as blind as Nirad Choudhary's minus NC's encyclopaedic knowledge. In Malaysia Naipaul talked to two girls who were members of ABIM, a Muslim youth movement. They had read Barbara Cartland and Denise Robins, and on being asked, they acknowledged that they had read Mills and Boon books. Naipaul interrupts the dialogue report to tell his (western?) reader: 'These short paperback light romances, known by the name of their English publisher rather than the names of the authors, have been successfully promoted in many countries of the Commonwealth. They meet the imaginative needs of people new to education and city life; they appear to instruct in modern ways of feeling, and are read even by university students, and even by men.' So Mills and Boon mush becomes a medium of 'modern ways of feeling' which pose no threat to the rational culture of the West. Nor does the American torture-equipment the late Shah of Iran used to curb intellectuals. Nor does the massive aid America has given to help the military regime in Indonesia to repress free opinion. Such unpleasant matters do not concern Naipaul. Sometimes I feel that Naipaul is able to write so well and so much because he is grounded in a belief. He is no ironist. He stands firm on his commitment to the West, its science, its press, its economy. The only point on which he does not come off well as a western liberal is that he grudges others' finding their own patches of firm ground to stand on.

The overlay of rigid faith in Islam that Naipaul found in nearly all the individuals he met deeply disturbed him, so much so he sometimes missed seeing the person underneath. He does not accept that they have accepted faith as *their* means to stay sane, that many of them might have accepted the faith with the aim that Marx thought many people have, that of forgetting their suffering, to find an impossible solution to an impossible problem.

The spectre of fundamentalist revival of ancient Islamic procedures of punishment, rules for women, and styles of political control makes Naipaul so nervous that he forgets the political context of this fundamentalist revival. He also forgets that the political context differs from one country to the next. In Iran it is acting as an all-powerful oppressive force after having acted as a nucleus to which Ifanians were drawn in their common struggle against the Shah's oppression. In Indonesia the fundamentalist lobby is trying to provide such a nucleus, one to which people might be drawn to fight their long oppression by the military. There are hardly any similarities between the two.

It is unjustifiable to believe that fundamentalism is a part of Islamic faith, that belief in Islamic political reform necessarily implies harking back to the time of Abu-bakr and Omar. Of course, a section of

any political lobby with a religious approach (whatever the religion it speaks for) is tough-minded and compulsively refers to an ancient short spell of glory. How much power this section gains in the process of political recovery from a military or foreign-controlled rule is a matter of social dynamics which will differ in each society. One might forget this simple sense, and one should be forgiven for forgetting, in an airport lobby when impersonal bureaucrats are deciding whether you can enter the country to travel in it. But such experience need not cloud one's perception of ordinary people when they repeat what their oppressive masters want to hear. I do not know how a seasoned observer of humanity which Naipaul is can ignore that it is just as human to comply with the oppressor as it is to think of fighting against one.

Krishna Kumar

MUSLIM WOMEN IN PURDAH AND OUT OF IT
IT by Jamila Brijbhushan. Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980.

MUSLIM Women in Purdah and Out of it is not as the name suggests a book about the changing status of Muslim women the world over. It is in fact a book about Muslim women in India, and the major part is devoted to the rights given to women by Islam — the religion the author upholds as 'the only religion which while not giving women absolutely equal rights gave them very real rights about inheritance and divorce.'

From general observations regarding the place of women in the Indian sub-continent, the book graduates to Muslim women in particular. The most flagrant violation of the equality of the sexes is in the institution of polygamy which is allowed under Islam. Brijbhushan however states that the *Quran* did not enjoin polygamy for all, but it was to be practised only when certain pre-conditions existed which included the 'barren-ness of the wife' or 'the domicile of the man in places where women greatly outnumber men.' Besides these incidental factors, the *Quran* states that no man should marry more than once unless he is confident he can treat his wives with equality and justice. This dictum makes it impossible for the husband to take two or more wives with a free conscience. But the dictates of Islam according to Brijbhushan are all honoured up to the point it suits the male members of the community and are often breached for convenience.

The contents of the book are primarily what the *Quran* says about marriage, divorce, adoption, polygamy, education, family planning, inheritance and the like; as well as the interpretations given by the mullahs and ulemas. But a lot of these are not only womens problems, but are issues relating to the family unit and these are not the only issues women are concerned about. The author tries to analyse the place of women only in the sphere which should traditionally be hers. In any case, the analysis is very superficial and the book abounds in generalisations.

The views of women are expressed but actual statistical evidence of the 50 women interviewed for the study is nowhere clearly presented. Exactly how many felt that polygamy was 'barbaric', how many were indifferent and how many thought there was 'no harm in it' is not clear. The statistical data though limited should have been tabulated

There are some references to changes in Islamic law in Muslim countries such as Egypt, Turkey, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan and Bangladesh and Indonesia some of which have enacted legislation to ban polygamy while others exercise indirect control. In India, the ulemas and male members have hindered legislation and the government cannot push it through for fear of being confronted by allegations of repression on the minority community later.

In fact, more than once, the inferior status of Muslim women in India has been attributed to Hinduism where women were regarded only as 'man's possessions'. The lack of widow remarriage, low divorce rates, the sanctity of marriage, the seclusion of women are all in part the result of Hindu influence according to the author.

On family planning, as on most other subjects the Prophet's saying can be interpreted as being both for and against the practise. Brijbhushan displays conventional rural wisdom when she makes a statement saying that a farmer or an artisan can hope to become quite affluent if he has sons who will work with him for no wages. If this was true then all a farmer or artisan needed to become rich would be a large family!

The book does not tell us what Muslim women are doing today in India or elsewhere; those who have discarded the purdah or those who continue to don it. The important thing is how emancipated they are, how they regard themselves, how their attitudes are changing, how many of them are working and in what kind of jobs, the class to which they belong; and most importantly how the men are reacting to these changes. These issues are ignored except for a few sentences in passing.

The book makes interesting reading for those who are looking for general information about the Muslims in India. Though it lacks the class of an academically useful study due to the issues it chooses to discuss as well as its almost non-existent data base, it has a limited value. It describes the upbringing, lifestyles, marriage rituals, divorce and other customs *et al* of the Indian Muslim. However, apart from the fact that Muslim women are now aware of their rights (as given by the *Quran*) and are prepared to fight for them, one can see no signs of emancipation. Brijbhushan too on her part advocates restoration of womens rights with some modifications, but all within the larger bounds of Islamic law.

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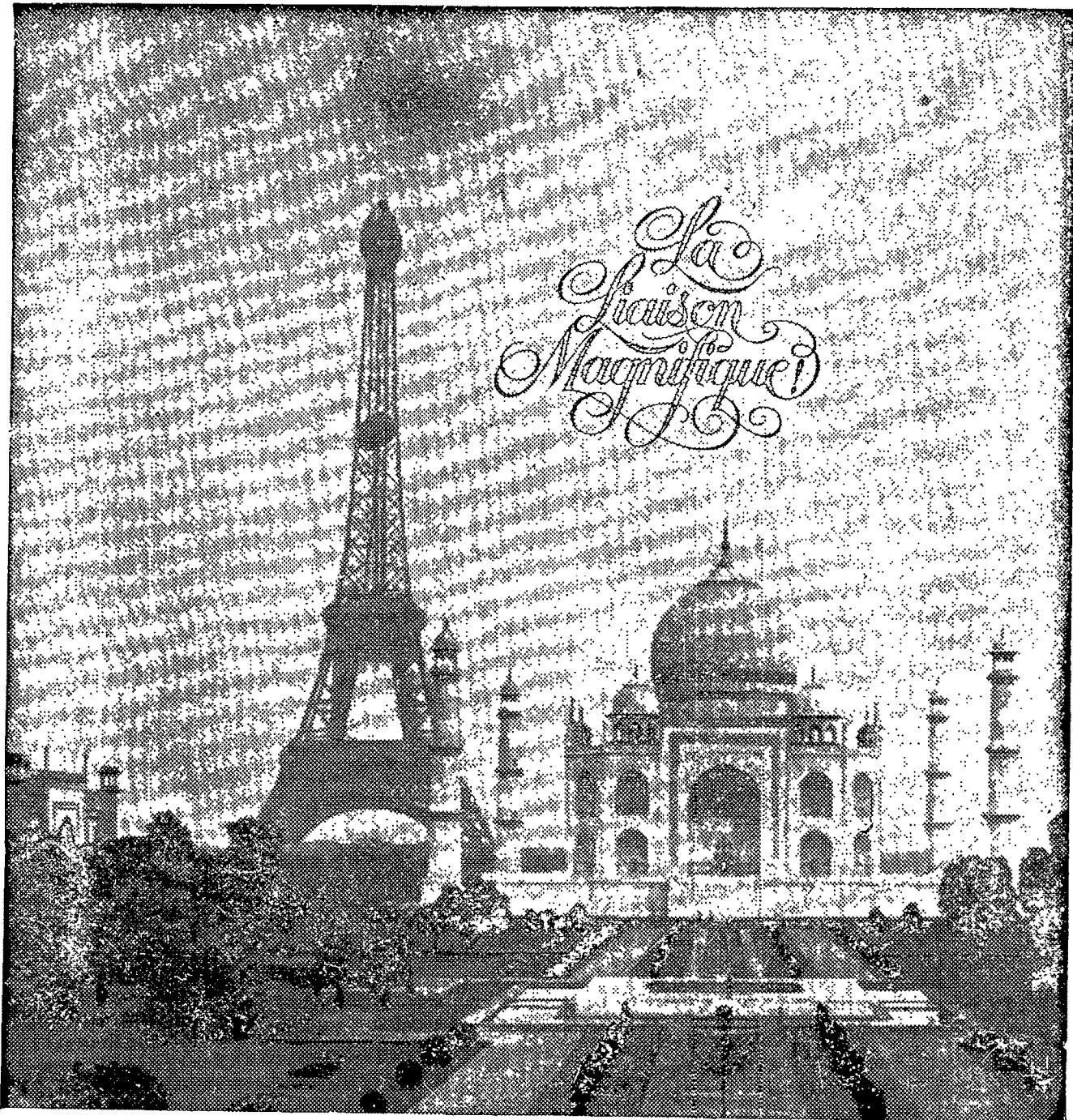
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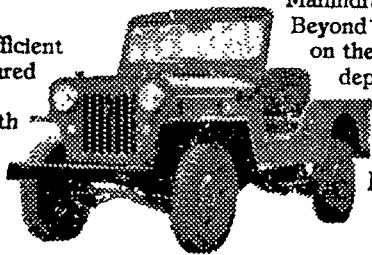
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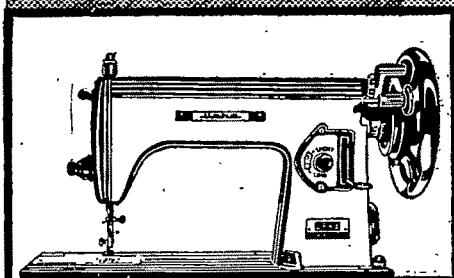
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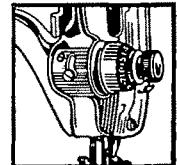
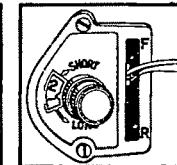
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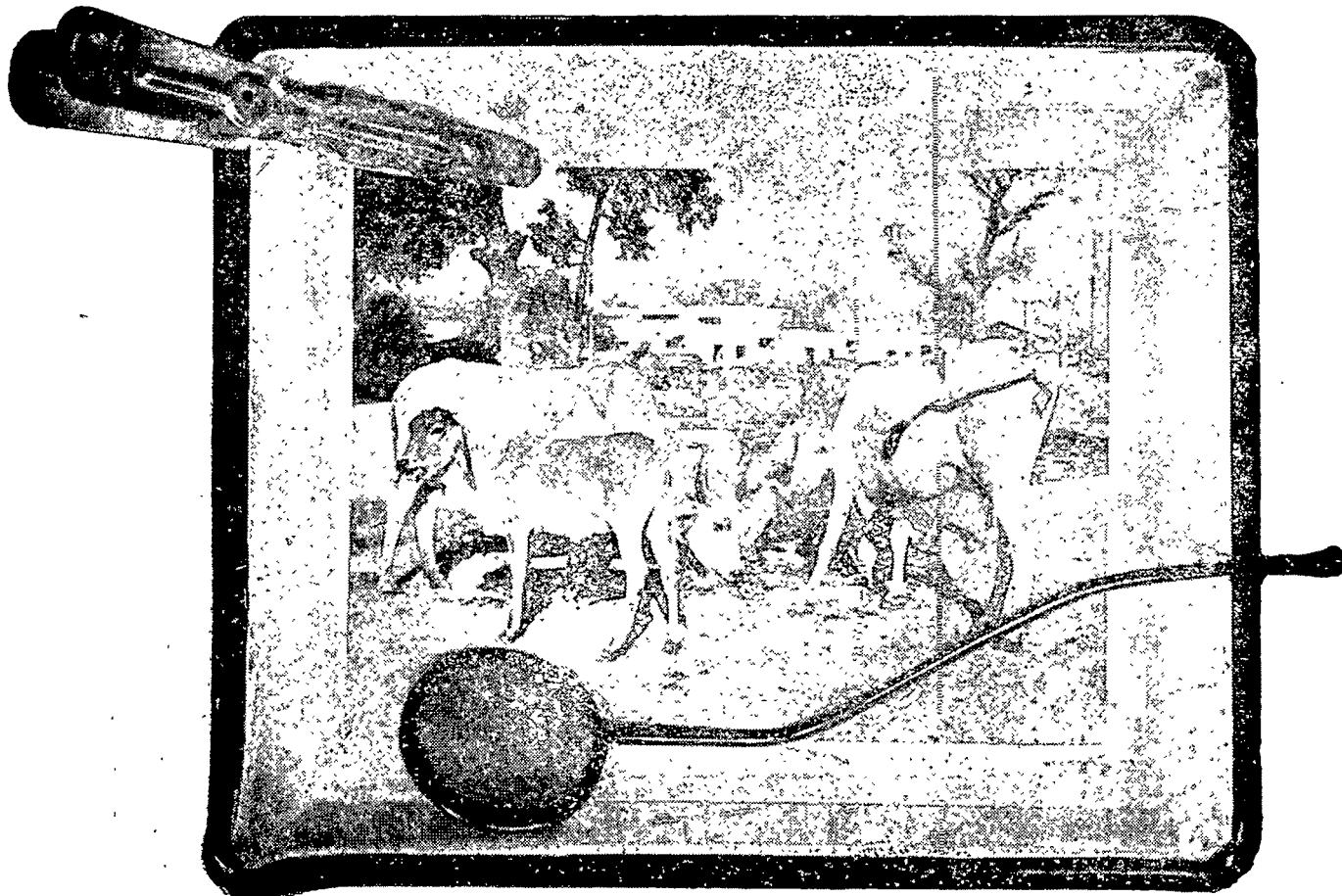
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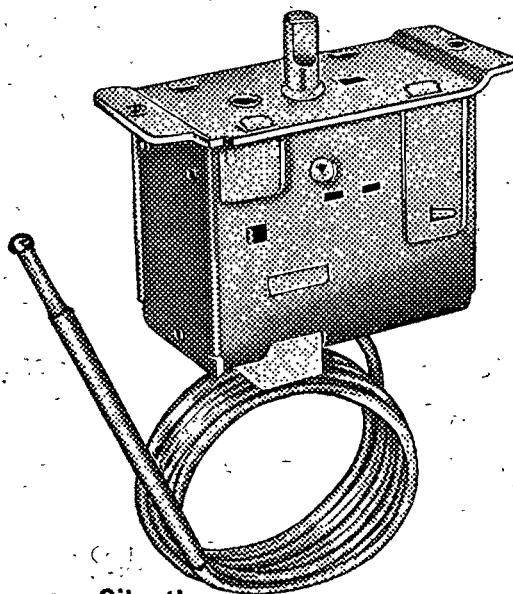
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SOCIAL DILEMMAS

a symposium on
some emerging confusions
and contradictions

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM
A short statement of
the issues involved

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COVER
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The problem

AS our world moves out of its earlier simplicities, dilemmas confront us everywhere, particularly social dilemmas. In today's world, familiar terms and concepts undergo change so rapidly that it is difficult to keep pace with that change. We need, therefore, to pause a bit and think. May be, pose a new set of questions. Perhaps that may help us understand why solutions continue to elude us. Take a random sampling. Has there been any change in the nature of communal riots which might bring us nearer the actual causes than merely the religious ones? Or the question of the law as it interprets the rights of citizens? Can freedom be defended in anarchy or do we have to define that inner autocratic core which sustains it? Do the complexities of science and technology liberate life or do they create the varied bureaucracies which crush the human spirit? Can activists working with the people consider themselves outside the world of politics? Do the inhibitions cultivated through the long

past of history provide the underpinnings of civilised behaviour or do we need to discuss anew our moralities in the face of an enormously overpopulated world? This is where the debate on abortion assumes significance. One could go on and on. Is the concept of equality tenable or do we merely pay lip service to it in the dreamworlds we create? Where does tradition surrender to modernity and are lasting mutations possible in societies growing younger or older? And where does the so-called intellectual fit into all of this? What is his role? To keep probing, burrowing like a mole to unearth the truth, or a point nearer the truth? It is a questing which has no end if we believe in a world which must become less oppressive for the oppressed, which must create the opportunity to live in peace in a world of peace. This issue of SEMINAR is working towards that end.

A theory of communal riots

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

A NUMBER of empirical studies have been carried out on communal riots by this author as well as many others. In the light of these field investigations it is necessary to develop a broad theoretical framework. Of course, such a framework may not be very comprehensive as in every riot there are variegated factors in operation. Apart from certain broad aspects, each riot has some unique features which play no less important a role in igniting the situation and which must be duly taken note of. We propose to throw light on all these aspects in this article while attempting to develop a broad theoretical framework.

The first thing in this connection is that the age-old theory of putting the blame on the British policy of divide and rule or ascribing it to the colonial policy of underdevelopment of the economy is no longer sufficient to explain the nature of contemporary communal rioting in India. This theory had validity then and has partial validity even now in the form of a lingering legacy. But it is no longer adequate to explain comprehensively the complex nature of communal violence today.

In order to develop a plausible theory, it would be necessary to take

into account the dynamics of the economic development and social change accompanying it. Any theory which tends to ignore this cannot adequately explain the true nature of communal or caste violence in modern India. But unfortunately most of the explanations offered still tend to put more than necessary emphasis on the British imperialist policies on the one hand, and the role of history, specially of the Muslim period, on the other.

Such explanations, as we shall see later, do not explain much although they are not totally invalid. I would go a step further and maintain that in the face of socio-economic changes, the role of different political parties in promoting communalism, even those claiming to be ideologically secular, will also have to be thoroughly examined because ultimately, at one stage or the other, they have led to the outbreak of communal violence. It would not do to blame certain traditionally communal parties only like the RSS, the Jamaat-e-Islami etc.. I do not, for moment, maintain that these latter parties play in the present situation any less blameworthy role; I would even say that they play the main role but this should not make us oblivious to the role of ruling parties, even the opposition parties while on

of office, in promoting communalism, although claiming to be secular.

Now, I will elaborate some of these points which can be said to have greater applicability today. To begin with, I would like to emphasise that in any communal riot micro as well as macro-level factors are involved. Whereas macro-level factors are mostly ideologically oriented, the micro-level factors tend to be local issue-oriented. However, and this is important, both the micro and macro-level factors are integrally connected with the socio-economic developments taking place in the country. In other words, the whole problem should be viewed in the perspective of the dynamics of social change and development. A social scientist has to take the changes at the base seriously in order to grapple with the changes taking place in the super-structure, although without trying to establish a one to one relationship between the two, as often observed.

In order to understand the nature of communal violence in modern India one also has to understand the role of various classes, social organizations, political parties — communal as well as secular — and the aspirations of the elites of the communities involved in the conflict. It should also be borne in mind that contrary to the impression carried by the people in general, *religion is not the root cause of the communal conflict*; it is, rather, a powerful instrument in the hands of those interests which seek to play their game through it. It is wrong to make it the *cause celebre* as is often sought to be done by vested interests, political as well as economic, who want to hide their real intentions from the masses.

Many good-intentioned secularists and rationalists, too, often make this mistake of holding religion as the main culprit in this matter. It is, to say the least, a rather unsociological approach to communal violence. In other words, one must distinguish between religious violence — the reasons for which lay in sectarian and doctrinaire differences — and communal violence — the reasons for which lay in the conflict over

controlling political power and economic resources between the elites of the two communities.

It is precisely for this reason that communalism is borne of secular issues and communal parties led by, or communalism promoted by, secular leaders. It is not therefore surprising that the Muslim League in the pre-partition period was led by M.A. Jinnah, a thoroughly westernised, even modernised, Muslim and the chief ideologue of the Hindu Mahasabha happened to be Savarkar who had a modern outlook and stood for reforming Hinduism from within. Neither the Muslim League nor the Hindu Mahasabha was led by a mullah or a Shankracharya. Communalism is all about secular issues without involving any religious sectarian doctrine. So, the instrumentality of religion should not cause us any confusion as to the real nature of communalism.

Now, we first propose to deal with the macro-factors involved in promoting communalism and communal violence. The most important aspect of macro-level theorising about communalism is the class nature of the society on one hand, and under-development of the economy and scarcity of resources, on the other. The under-development of the economy often results in an uneven development of the economy, both community as well as region-wise and this uneven development throws up the problem of communal or regional identity. What we are witnessing in Assam and Punjab today is a similar phenomenon. But more of it later.

The uneven development community-wise leads to a situation where the inter-communal cohesive class structure does not develop, whether it be the capitalist class or the proletarian class. Thus, the upper classes of the less-developed community feel a strong sense of rivalry vis-a-vis their counterparts in the other community which has gained the upper hand. And, in such a situation, in order to win the support of the masses of one's community, the grievances are formulated not in one's class terms but in

terms of the ethos of one's community.

This can best be done by adding a few religio-cultural demands to the down-to-earth economic demands on one hand, and by mythologising the community's past on the other. Thus, we see that the communalists among both the communities have often glorified their respective past and projected it as a golden period free of any inter-class or inter-ethnic conflict. Thus, mythologising and romanticising one's community's past serves as a very powerful instrument for mobilising the masses for realising class aspirations. Such an instrument proves far more powerful in a socially backward society like India.

As a consequence of what has been stated above, in a backward and communally divided society like India, it becomes very difficult to develop class solidarity across communal lines, especially in the case of the working classes who, ironically, happen to be the main victims of communal violence. In their case a mythologized version of history as well as other powerful myths cleverly manipulated by the exploiting classes have far greater mobilizational potentiality than their own class interests. It is particularly true of the urban petty bourgeois classes.

This brings us to another important aspect of the theory of communalism. Communalism, all social scientists agree, is an urban phenomenon rooted among the petty bourgeoisie. In a backward society, it is among this class that traditional religion has the greatest appeal. The real base both of the RSS and the Jamaat-e-Islami is among the urban petty bourgeois classes. Their religious sentiments are successfully exploited for secular ends by the elites of the respective communities. Thus, the danger of communalism keeps on looming large on the socio-political horizon of India.

Another important characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie is its tendency to submit to authority. This is taken advantage of by the communal parties which develop anti-democratic authoritarian structures. Both the RSS and the Jamaat lay

emphasis on submission to authority rather than free thinking and democratic functioning. This also leads to blind submission to the authority of God or the holy scriptures, thus perpetuating utter conservatism in the society.

There is another problem at macro-level to be taken into account which is integrally connected with the dynamics of social change in the country. Socio-economic changes, especially in a tradition-bound society, bring about a deep sense of insecurity among those strata of society which are adversely affected by it. The working as well as the petty bourgeois classes are usually the worst affected in such a situation. They are already tradition-prone and the sense of insecurity accompanying socio-economic changes reinforces this tendency. Thus, they provide a fertile ground for religious revivalist movements. Many who feel that development and change should lead to greater rationality in society are baffled by this outcome. Their mechanical theories turn out not to be true. In fact the sense of insecurity generated by such socio-economic changes for a sizeable section of the society increases the appeal of religion by providing solace and reducing the psychological tensions involved.

The recent rise of religious fundamentalism must be seen in this perspective. However, there are two categories of religious revivalism and fundamentalism so far as the Indian socio-religious scene is concerned. In the first, I include the proliferation of yogis, babas and other religious gurus, teachers and tricksters of all varieties who exploit the growing sense of insecurity, the urban tensions and other stresses generated by the modern industrial pattern of life. They also satisfy the urge for social recognition by the new rich as well as secure important channels for the flow of black money to the ruling politicians from smugglers, black marketeers, profiteers and other similar sources.

16 Such religious frauds are fast multiplying in our urban areas, strengthening and promoting irrationalism. The ruling classes even

otherwise encourage such trends as these irrational cults generate illusions and a false consciousness among the masses, thus providing at least temporary stability to the crisis-ridden economic system. However, these cults and frauds do not directly lead to the promotion of communal conflict as they ostensibly keep out of the political arena. They do not reflect the aspirations of the rising bourgeoisie but provide them a haven and refuge.

In the second category, i.e., religious fundamentalism, I include movements like Vishwa Hindu Parishad or the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. These movements reflect the rising ambitions of the petty bourgeoisie. Here, the religious revivalism has clearly directed political goals. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, seizing upon the opportunity provided by the conversion of a few Harijans to Islam launched a calculated propaganda offensive, thus intensifying communal conflict in the country. Many communal riots investigated by the present writer for example in Ahmedabad in December 1983, in Pune, Sholapur and Pandharpur thereafter, were the direct result of intensive campaigning by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. In the Meerut riots, lasting through September to early October last year, the hand of the VHP was not invisible. The VHP continues to publish millions of pamphlets in various languages and paint wall slogans in most of the towns and cities to promote militant Hinduism. It would not be wrong to say that VHP has provided new virulence to the communal cancer in our society today. Such virulence is needed by a section of the ruling classes to manage the crisis in the system.

There is yet another related factor at macro-level which has important bearing on the theory of communal conflict in our society — the militant assertion of regional and communal identity. This assertion is the direct result of conflict over the share in limited economic resources. As aspirations rise and economic development is extremely sluggish, conflict is bound to result among different sections of society. The rising aspirations are expressed by these

sections of society through the medium of either regional or religio-cultural identity. Recently, we have seen its extreme manifestation in Assam and Punjab.

Assam has for long been a neglected area and has not had its due share of economic development. Moreover, for long the Bengalis monopolised government jobs and cultural positions. This, coupled with the immigration of the poor peasantry from Bangla Desh, created a sharp conflict situation in Assam which was expressed through the medium of regional and cultural identity. The Assamese nationality is asserting itself through the question of cultural identity of the people of Assam. This movement is being led by the middle-classes and petty bourgeoisie in Assam. These classes are asserting their regional identity vis-a-vis the Bengali identity in order to claim ever increasing share in economic development.

Today the Marwaris control the urban economy in Assam. One day, there is bound to be conflict between the native Assamese bourgeoisie and the Marwaris and hence the attempt of the RSS there to give a communal twist to the regional problem. The Assamese question since then has become far more complex. Due to clever manipulations by the RSS the emphasis on regional identity has weakened and communal identity has assumed more malignant militancy. The massacre of Bengali Muslims in the Neili area bears testimony to this shift in emphasis.

An important ingredient of the theory of communalism is the hypothesis that where the sense of regional and cultural identity is strong, the communal conflict tends to be weaker. This hypothesis had been valid so far in States like Kashmir, Assam, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, etc.. Today it is no longer so. We are witnessing sharp communal conflict in all these States. Assam, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu are turning into hotbeds of communal conflict. It would be interesting to examine some of these.

The Punjabis were the most assimilated cultural lot. The Sikhs and

Hindus often intermarried and the cases of one of the sons of a Punjabi Hindu family converting to Sikhism were also not rare. There had never been historical animosity between the Sikhs and Hindus either. At the time of partition also the Sikhs and Hindus stood united. With this history of harmony and coexistence, a sharp communal conflict has developed between the Hindus and the Sikhs. What went wrong? Why this sudden eruption of communal conflict?

The Sikhs are asserting their separate identity today as they feel aggrieved in a number of ways. The Akalis are not fighting only for religious demands. These have been accepted by the Central Government anyway. The real question pertains to economic demands. An adequate share in river waters, hydro-electric power, control over Chandigarh and Abohar and Fazilka districts are some of the important demands put forward by the Akalis. They, in other words, represent the aspirations of the Sikh bourgeoisie in Punjab which has come into direct conflict with the Punjabi Hindu bourgeoisie. The Akalis, by putting forward religious demands are trying to mobilize the Sikh masses. Here again is the question of the reassertion to Sikh fundamentalism to realise secular aspirations of the dominant classes among the Sikhs.

The assertion of a religious and communal identity by the Sikhs is a political necessity as the Jat Sikhs who are more prosperous and numerous live mostly in rural areas. Their new found prosperity has led to the breaking of traditional moral bonds and has also increased their secular aspirations for an ever-expanding share in economic development. The increasing alienation of Jat Sikhs from traditional religion alarmed the Akalis whose hold over them was loosening. Hence, they are trying to 'stem the rot' by a militant assertion of their communal identity on the one hand and, by putting forward economic demands representing the aspirations of the Sikh kulaks and bourgeoisie, on the other. The Anandpur Sahib resolution demanding complete autonomy

for the State of Punjab should also be viewed in this perspective.

This militant assertion of religious identity, while increasing the Akali hold over the Jat Sikh peasantry, has brought the Sikhs themselves in sharp conflict with the Punjabi Hindus and hence the fast developing communal imbroglio in Punjab.

Kerala was another State known for its communal harmony although three important communities — Hindus, Muslims and Christians — lived there for centuries. This State was also culturally and linguistically very well integrated and, hence, according to our hypothesis, inter-communal tensions were far less, if not totally absent. However, the socio-economic situation is fast changing and the new politics of changing alliances has introduced a strong element of communalism. The Muslim League joined the alliance (which was formed by the then Congress Party to dethrone the communists in 1956) on certain terms and conditions.

More such alliances came into existence and the alliance partners competed with each other in conceding demands put forward by various communal groups. The Nairs, not to be outdone by the others, encouraged the RSS to strengthen its base in Kerala. And, soon, with the advent of the RSS the communal virus began to spread very fast. Communal riots were unknown earlier in Kerala but with the Tellichery riots in 1970 (in which the involvement of the RSS was established by the commission of inquiry) Kerala also now has the dubious distinction of having its place on the map of places beset with communal riots. After Hindu-Muslim riots, now Hindu-Christian riots are taking place in Kerala as well as in Tamil Nadu.

Thus, it is clear that the ruling political parties, both at the centre as well as the State level encourage, in order to ensure the maximum number of votes, communal as well as casteist tendencies. One can cite the latest example of elections in Kashmir. In order to capture a few more seats for her party in the valley, Mrs. Indira Gandhi made

speeches which clearly smacked of communalism. Moreover, she would speak one thing in the valley and another in Jammu. She tried to capitalise on the Hindu sentiments in Jammu and the RSS cadres worked for her party to ensure victory for the seats traditionally claimed by the BJP. Farouq Abdullah retaliated by entering into an alliance with Mir Waiz who still questions the validity of Kashmir's accession to India. The so-called secular parties thus openly and unabashedly promoted rank communalism to win a few more seats at the hustings.

An economic crisis is deepening faster than ever before in this country. This crisis is the crisis of underdeveloped capitalism in the entire third world countries pursuing the path of capitalist development. The capitalist path of development cannot manage the crisis successfully and deliver the goods. It has to be managed by other means. Encouraging religious conservatism, promoting religious fundamentalism with obvious political motives to strengthen the traditional feudal bases of society are some of these other means. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in her capacity as Prime Minister, is known to have encouraged a delegation led by Shalwale of the Arya Samaj to launch a campaign against the conversions of a few Harijans to Islam. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad also took the cue and became far more aggressive. Such tactics not only endear her to the upper caste Hindus and ensure their votes but also help in strengthening the conservative bases of our society. Radio, T.V. and films are also being used for this end. The RSS, not surprisingly, is clandestinely, and wherever necessary openly, supporting the Prime Minister in her efforts. Thus communalism and conservatism, in our country today, are no longer the monopoly of traditional communal parties. All these other factors must be taken into account for any comprehensive theory of communal conflict in contemporary Indian society.

As pointed out in the beginning of this article, it is necessary to take both macro as well as micro level

factors into account to understand the real nature of communal conflict in our society. Intensive field studies of communal riots illustrate the micro-level factors which we will now consider.

More often than not, communal tension develops in a particular town on some local issue. Those who theorise often ignore the significance of these local issues—what I call the micro factors. As in pre-independence days, local issues are no longer confined to the playing of music before a mosque or the slaughter of a cow, although even today these have by no means lost their validity. But new factors, in keeping with the changing socio-economic pattern, have sprung up on the communal horizon. Some of these are competition between rival traders or small manufacturers of the two communities, competition between two gangs of hoodlums dealing either in smuggling, illicit arms or liquor or similar other anti-social activities, scheming by local industrial magnates to weaken trade unions by raising some communal issue, elections to local bodies or contest over some Assembly or parliamentary seats, etc.

Then, most of the riots tend to occur in medium sized towns (where petty bourgeois elements, who are usually quite conservative and often tend to be communal, predominate). Among these towns, those with a larger proportion of Muslims, say 20 to 50 per cent, are more riot prone. The tendency to be riot-prone gets further intensified if there is an entrepreneurial class of Muslims competing with, and challenging the monopoly of, the Hindu businessmen. Further, the tendency of such communal conflict gets far more intensified in towns with a previous history of communal riots.

Keeping these characteristics in mind, one can easily understand why Moradabad, Aligarh, Meerut, Jamshedpur, Benaras, Bhivandi, Malegaon, the old city of Hyderabad etc., are communal hotbeds and scenes of frequent communal eruptions. Based on my field experiences, I would like to illuminate some of these factors.

In a ballot-box oriented democracy, the larger the proportion of a minority population in a town, the greater the political rivalry between the elites of the two communities who try to mobilize the voters by appealing to their respective communal identities? In Meerut, with a 40% Muslim population, even the Cong-I was divided on communal lines because a Muslim candidate for assembly or parliamentary election was rated as having a much better chance of winning. This frustrated the Hindu leadership of Cong-I which, it is alleged, came to a clandestine understanding with the local BJP leadership. The Mandir-Mazar controversy was merely a symbolic expression of the political ambitions of the two communities. A siege mentality was sought to be created among the Hindus through systematic propaganda in order to win their votes in any coming election.

In Biharsharif a powerful economic factor, rather than political one, was responsible for the communal carnage. This town in the Nalanda district of Bihar also has a large Muslim population — around 35%. There are extensive Muslim cemetery lands — many of them having fallen into disuse. Potato cultivation in this district is on the rise and quite profitable. Many cold-storage plants have also sprung up and as a consequence the land prices have been skyrocketing. The Yadavas, a cultivating caste, had their eyes on the cemetery lands and thus conflict arose between the Muslims and the Yadavas which soon erupted in communal violence. It is worth noting here that in these riots mainly the Yadavas were involved with the powerful backing of the RSS. The reason is obvious: the Yadavas had an economic interest vis-a-vis the Muslims.

There was a subsidiary political factor as well. Biharsharif is a centre of beedi manufacturing and mostly the poor Muslims and the low-caste Hindus are engaged in beedi making. The beedi labourers have been organised into trade unions by the CPI. The CPI thus had a stronghold and at the time of the communal violence, both the MLA

as well as the M.P. belonged to the CPI. But, the RSS had the advantage of changing class consciousness into communal consciousness. Even the poor Hindus and Muslims, forgetting their class interest, began to identify themselves, after the riot, more vigorously with their respective communities and were prone to manipulation by the elites of their communities.

In Godhra, the conflict was mainly between Sindhis and Ghanchi Muslims. The Ghanchi Muslims, quite predominant and industrious, are rising economically and today hold the monopoly of the transport trade in Panchmahal district. Sindhis and Ghanchi Muslims compete with each other in petty business also. Both communities are rivals in anti-social activities like running gambling dens, etc. There is also an acute shortage of housing and Sindhis, being more akin culturally and economically to the Ghanchi Muslims, have an eye on their properties. There is often dispute over positioning of stalls along the station road. Thus, communal violence frequently erupts between these two specific communities from amongst the Hindus and Muslims. Gujarati Hindus and other non-Ghanchi Muslims have not been involved directly in communal violence although they are highly sympathetic to their respective Hindu and Muslim communities.

From these instances, it is clear that the Hindus and Muslims should not be treated as homogeneous or unstratified communities. Often the specific castes, or *biradaris* from amongst the Hindus and Muslims are involved in actual conflict although retaining the broad sympathy of their respective co-religionists. Even culturally and ethnically it is highly misleading to treat any religious community as homogeneous.

As pointed out above, economic competition often results in communal conflict. And specially so when the Muslims begin to acquire economic clout. Well, this has been an empirical fact observed at a number of places. We have already cited two examples above, i.e., from

Biharsharif and Godhra. More examples can be cited from Aligarh and Moradabad. Competition in the lock industry in Aligarh and the brass industry in Moradabad has led to communal conflict. It is on this basis that some social scientists have begun to argue that the communal riots in modern India constitute structural violence. This is true provided one concedes other equally or more important causative factors hinted at above.

This need not lead one to the fatalistic conclusion that the Muslims will have to pay with blood if they wish to inch ahead in the economic field, which would be too extreme a view, indeed. All it indicates is that in a backward capitalist economy and in a country like India with its multi-caste and multi-communal socio-economic formations, straight class conflict is bound to be replaced by caste, class and community-class conflict, sometimes the class factor becoming predominant and at other times caste or community factors becoming predominant. The European model of class conflict pure and simple cannot apply to a non-cohesive and highly stratified society with its own unique socio-economic formations like that of India. In addition to class conflict the complexities and uniqueness of the Indian situation is also reflected through caste and communal conflict.

Another important factor at micro-level is the role of anti-social elements organised into powerful gangs. These gangs operate in the urban underworld and deal in either illicit liquor, smuggling of foreign goods or illicit arms. The proliferation of the underworld is an indirect result of industrialisation on the one hand and the green revolution on the other, within the capitalist framework. The number of lowly paid workers and lumpen elements increase in the urban areas, boosting the demand for cheap illicit liquor, generation of black money leads to greater demand for smuggled goods and increased degree of agitations for better wages both in urban and rural areas lead to greater demands for illicit arms to suppress these agitations.

The role of these underworld gangs is being increasingly noted in communal riots as well. Baroda was the classic instance. The rivalry between two illicit liquor gangs led respectively by a Hindu and a Muslim erupted in the form of a communal riot during September-October 1982. One of the gangs led by Shiva Kahar enjoyed the support of a section of the ruling party. This section was allegedly encouraging these elements. In this connection, one must not forget that politicians today need both money as well as the muscle power of the underworld to finance and win elections. They in turn provide them with immunity against any action.

The involvement of anti-social elements in the Jamshedpur and Moradabad riots is also a known fact. If empirical data is any indication, this menace will continue to grow in the future. What is worse, the underworld is fast acquiring a greater and greater degree of autonomy. The politicians need that underworld more now than it needs them. In some cases, the powerful elements in the underworld are themselves taking to politics. Needless to say, this is becoming a most menacing combination.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that to develop a comprehensive theory of communal conflict for the contemporary Indian society one will have to take macro as well as micro factors into account. Among the micro factors are country-wide socio-economic changes as a result of following the capitalist path of development, policies pursued by the ruling political parties both at the Centre as well as in the States, the alliances struck by the so called secular parties, reckoning of caste and communal groups for ensuring victory at the hustings, deliberate attempt to encourage religious fundamentalism by the ruling classes in order to manage the deepening economic crisis through other means, etc. The ruling classes as a whole are responsible for encouraging caste and communal identities thus aggravating communal conflict. It would not do to blame the known communal parties and groups like the RSS, Jamaat-e-Islami, etc. only.

At micro-level one must take into account factors like the proportion of Muslim population, nature of economic competition between the two communities, history of communal riots in the area, election politics to local bodies, role of the anti-social elements, local political alliances etc. In any riot situation, both the micro and macro factors play an important role, of course, varying in degree from place to place. In certain extreme situations only macro or micro level factors can become the causative factors. For example in the Godhra and Baroda riots only micro level factors were important, the macro level ones being nearly absent.

In the Ahmedabad riot of 1969 on the other hand, the macro factor was largely responsible. The split in the ruling Congress, nationalisation of banks with its implied ideological shift to the Left made the rightist opposition parties like the Jana Sangh aggressively raise the bogey of Muslim aggressiveness and their refusal to merge with the 'national mainstream' and it went to the extent of adopting the resolution on 'Indianisation of Indian Muslims'. The Congress (O) at that time made an alliance with the Jana Sangh. Taking advantage of some trivial incidents near Jagannath temple, the Jana Sangh organised a large scale communal riot in Ahmedabad. The motive was to embarrass Indira Gandhi on the one hand, and to divert attention from the new Left-oriented economic policy to a fortuitous communal issue, on the other. The communal issue became the main topic of discussion in the country at the time.

While concluding, I would like to say with due emphasis that caste and communal identities are emotionally far stronger in this country than class identity and the ruling classes fully exploit this fact. With the slow process of economic growth, the conflict is bound to intensify and in India the ruling classes can easily divert the conflict from class to caste and communal channels. If we want to develop a scientific theory of communalism we better reckon with this reality sooner than later.

Rights and the judge

GIRISH AND KANNAN SRINIVASAN

WE are told that a legal revolution is on: that rights are daily expanded by an activist judiciary. As the Fundamental Rights have the Directive Principles read into them, they are supposedly transformed from the 'selfish rights of a few' to the 'socio-economic rights' of the majority of the people. Justice Chinappa Reddy of the Supreme Court has recently said that it is 'certain rights of a *peculiarly individual character* (which) were made Fundamental Rights...' (emphasis added). To say that this is political rhetoric is an insufficient explanation. What is the philosophy behind such pronouncements? Can rights be truly 'expanded' to become collective rights?

If we assume that collective rights exist, we face a certain problem. When different groups assert rights, how do we choose between the rights of one group and another?

We could say that we choose those rights which are more in accordance with true justice; but if justice is defined as the fulfilment of rights, then this becomes a circular argument. If we say simply that the rights of the larger group must prevail, that would amount to saying that the test of a right is the test of numbers. Whatever the majority says is right — whatever the consequences.

Let us suppose that no right exists which is not an individual liberty: a system of rights can then be defined as the most complete set of liberties for all which is *consistent* with equal liberties for each. This definition would accord with Kant's statement of the Categorical Imperative in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. 'Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become an universal law'. This would mean

that rights are restricted to what every member of society can enjoy.

Now, by definition, interests are what one wants while rights define one's entitlement. It is a principle of justice that no man shall be a judge in his own cause; so justice is concerned with entitlement and cannot be tainted by any possibility of special pleading. If a fundamental choice — what is claimed as a right — prevents someone else enjoying the same or any other freedom, it can be no right. It is this test of *universality* which will separate rights from privileges. Then we shall see that when the opposition arises between individual and collective choice, it is described falsely as an opposition of rights.

Now, in the Indian Constitution, the Directive Principles of State Policy are general recommendations to formulate and carry out long term policies. To say that those constitutional rights which are in Part Three are justiciable is to say that they can be maintained in the teeth of any legislative choice. So, the effect of reading the Directive Principles into the Fundamental Rights can be no enhancement of rights. No 'collective rights' can be produced. Instead, you get what could be called utilitarianism.

Utilitarianism, as the American philosopher John Rawls has demonstrated in *'The Theory of Justice'*, must overwhelm the rights. For, this philosophy sees satisfaction as a good in itself; each man wishes to gain the greatest happiness. As with an individual, so too, society should maximise satisfaction. Hence the rule: 'The greatest good of the greatest number.'

The assumption is that happiness can be measured on a scale, and different people's happiness can be measured in the same units and, therefore, simply added up. So what one is in effect doing is to arbitrarily pick one man, then use his standards. Society's plans are then reduced to this one man's plan of life. Essentially, as Rawls put it, 'utilitarianism does not recognize the distinction between individuals.'

Utilitarianism will never permit the inviolability of each human

being upon which rests the very notion of free choice. Surely mere satisfaction for other men will never seem a good sufficient for men to freely limit their interests? The logic of utilitarianism is the absolute enemy of rights.

Now, recent judgements of the Supreme Court have revived the utilitarian doctrine. It is claimed that policy choices, made purportedly in the interest of the general welfare, are compelled to override the individual rights. Covert and overt references are made to the 'mandate of the welfare State' in every expansion of rights. In the case of the *National Textile Workers' Union*, decided last December, Justice Bhagwati said: 'The adoption of the socialistic pattern of society as the ultimate goal of the country's social and economic policies hastened the emergence of this new concept of the corporation ... the Directive Principles of State Policy set out in Part IV clearly show the direction in which the corporate sector is intended to move...'

Also, recently, in *Sanjeev Coke Manufacturing Company*, Justice Chinappa Reddy laid down: 'The law made to further the directive principle ... would be valid on its own strength ... We are firmly of the opinion that where Article 13-C comes in, Article 14 goes out. There is no scope for bringing in the rule of equality before the law of Article 14 with the broader egalitarianism ... the narrower concept of equality before the law may frustrate the broader egalitarianism...'

In the *Judges Transfer Case* (where locus standi was enlarged) Justice Bhagwati said: 'The appointment of a judge ... does not depend merely upon the professional or functional suitability of the person concerned ... but also on several other considerations such as ... his approach towards the Preamble and the Directive Principles of State Policy...'

In every so-called 'expansion of rights', whether *Airport Authority* in 1979, or the *Asiad* case last year, a lecture is always read in about

'the mandate of the welfare State', and the relevance of the Directive Principles. In fact, the developing doctrine seems to be that enunciated by Justice Bhagwati in *Minerva Mills*: 'the yardstick for determining both reasonableness and public interest is to be found in the Directive Principles, and therefore, if any executive action is taken by the government for giving effect to Directive Principles, it would *prima facie* be reasonable and in the public interest. It will, therefore, be seen that if a law is enacted for the purpose of giving effect to a Directive Principle and it imposes a restriction on a Fundamental Right, it would be difficult to condemn such restriction as unreasonable and not in the public interest.' An expansion of rights only as the majority permits is an expansion of rights at the discretion of the State. We may find that more than the right hand has given, the left hand has taken away.

A legal right is justiciable precisely because it can be maintained despite the majority choice. The majority choice has to be the general rule of government. But, in the exceptional case, it falls to the Court to examine whether a right is violated. As we have argued, a right is truly a right if it can meet the test of universality. Not that it is equally available to all, but that it denies no one the possibility of the same right or of any right. So it is very narrowly defined. If it satisfies this, then it should prevail absolutely over any State policy.

This would mean that there should never be any question of any Court being asked to maintain any balance between the Directive Principles and the Fundamental Rights. A Directive Principle should be entirely inadmissible in any Court of Law. Any utilitarian claim on the question of rights must be rejected.

An instance. In 1971, the Twenty-fifth Amendment to our Constitution added Article 31C. This said that no law enacted for the purpose of securing the Directive Principles which urged the State to redistribute resources for the common good and to prevent economic concen-

tration [39 (b) & (c)] could ever be deemed to be void — even if it violated the right to equality before the law (Art. 4) the right to freedom (Art. 19) and the right to property (Art. 31).

Now, the Forty-second Amendment to the Constitution further extended this to say that no law for the purpose of *any* Directive Principle could be nullified because it violated those rights. This insertion was struck down by the Supreme Court in the case of *Minerva Mills*. But it should be apparent that even the earlier Twenty-fifth Amendment is entirely utilitarian. If the argument we have made holds true, then even that amendment should not stand; and the entire Article 31C should be deleted from the Constitution. So the Fundamental Rights must be read as a sufficient set of terms to judge all questions as to what is each citizen's legal entitlement.

The current phenomenon of the 'activist judiciary' raises the question: what is the proper business of a Court of Law?

How is a court entitled to interpret the law? For long it was assumed that a legal system could still be logically complete without any reference to principles of justice. Legal positivists like H.L.A. Hart in *The Concept of Law* have scrupulously maintained the distinction between law and morality. An unjust law is still a law; as Hart said 'it does not follow from the proposition that a rule is too iniquitous to obey that it is not a valid rule of law.' The very attention to procedure which this theory stressed had, its proponents argued, certain important merits: 'though the most odious laws may be justly applied, we have, in the bare notion of applying a general rule of law, the germ at least of justice.' The law, according to this view, is simply a collection of rules.

As a constitutional theory, this line of reasoning was applied to the Indian Constitution. It was felt to be mere obfuscation to posit a spirit to the whole set of laws. As H.M. Seervai said in *Constitutional Law of India*: 'A Court of Law must gather

the spirit of the Constitution from the language used; and what one may believe to be the language, which therefore, must be construed according to well-established rules of interpretation uninfluenced by an assumed spirit of the Constitution...'

The flaws in this conception become apparent when we note that legal rules do not cover every conceivable situation. For, it is stated that on occasions a judge must exercise his 'discretion'. But on what basis does he then decide?

Ronald Dworkin has made a valuable distinction between a legal rule and a legal principle. A rule has to be complete in that every possible exception to it can be stated. If it does not cover the particular instance within its definitions, it does not apply. Once overruled, it dies. But, on the other hand, there exist principles which do not derive their status from being statutes. A principle can be overruled in favour of another on occasion and yet survive as a principle; it does not set out all its conditions but gives the reason why one can argue in a certain direction.

So, 'discretion' is an inadequate account of what is happening when a judge is in fact weighing two or more principles against one another. If he must refer to principles of justice, the law, seen simply as a set of rules, cannot meet the requirement of being self-contained. Interpretations of the law must, therefore, necessarily be informed by a sense of what is just and unjust.

The positivist argument of the law of the Constitution was taken to its logical conclusion by counsel in the case of *Keshavananda Bharati*, heard in 1973. Even if the law sanctioned massive iniquity, so long as Parliament had made it, it was still a law. Parliament could amend as it could enact. The Constitution itself could be amended as readily as a Dog Act could be repealed.

The question was put: if nothing could limit or take away Parliament's power of amending, what if Parliament amended the amending power to deny itself the right to amend? It became clear in the course

of arguments that there must be a 'Basic Structure' to the Constitution, beyond the amending power. It was recognised, therefore, that there exist certain rights which can be maintained against any legislative majority, which are beyond any State action.

So, the rights beyond majority choice are legal rights. This means that there is a distinct domain for the Court. It should have complete and untrammelled authority over all the justiciable rights. The Fundamental Rights are defined as the absolute 'bottom line' requirements which the State may never infringe. The judge must step in whenever these basic rights are violated.

But, his business is nothing but these rights. There is, therefore, an inherent limit placed on the judge's role. He may not, in the search for 'arbitrariness in State action', judge whether a steel plant is an appropriate public investment. He must intervene only to protect the basic liberties. His jurisdiction should never exceed this. For, the mere whim of the judge cannot decide what is just and unjust. He may not discard the weight of law and precedent for so dangerously imprecise a notion as the 'social need of the time'. Should he find precedent inadequate, he must still be held responsible to a structure of legal thought in over-ruling the earlier decision. And if he cannot find support for his moral institution within this framework, it is his duty to suppress it. No judicial doctrine can evolve when procedure is abandoned in favour of pure judicial 'gut reaction'. Whatever civil liberties we still have may be lost.

All of the civil rights are equally important. Whether *habeas corpus* for an Andhra activist, or freedom of speech for a monopoly newspaper owner. Now, it is true that a right can be over-ruled: but that cannot be for any nebulous claim of public interest or 'general welfare'. The principle should be this. A right can be over-ruled *only* for the sake of the same or some other individual right. An Act of the legislature may be made for the sake of extending access to an individual right: if it seeks to limit a right while doing so,

it is conceivable that it is an improper exercise of the majority choice. At this point, it is for the Court to weigh one right against another, and choose which right shall prevail.

A true expansion of rights can only come through the expansion of rights already possessed. So, no rights can be bartered away for the future fulfilment of all of them. We should keep in mind that some of the admirable reliefs the courts have recently given, such as bail for Naxalites, are no part of any expansion of rights, but only the traditional process of law. These are only possible because there still exists some limited independence in the judiciary. Let the utilitarian principle be applied, we shall soon see 'progressive' judges, saying this of a union's decision to go on strike: 'the selfish rights of a few should not be permitted to impede the greatest good of the greatest number.'

We should beware of what Justice Bhagwati laid down in the *Judges Transfer Case* as the role of a judge. There exists he said... 'an obligation on every instrumentality including the judiciary ... to transform the status quo ... the judiciary cannot remain content to act merely as an umpire, but it must be functionally involved in the goal of socio-economic justice ... the concept of the independence of the judiciary (includes) ... freedom from prejudices acquired and nourished by the class to which the judges belong...' This is a very tall order, indeed. Do we expect the judge to be entirely outside the social process?

Justice is no more than what is each man's due. For what else can be meant when it is said that justice is fairness? The notion that something is fair or unfair is clearly part of the concept of rights; if an action denies a person of his rights, we deem it unfair. It is possible that some of those which are today termed rights can be no more than privileges: for it is arguable that property and freedom of contract cannot suffer the test of universality which separates rights from interests. Yet, when the very basis of society's institutions is inequality, neither 'judicial activism', nor the so-called 'mandate of the welfare State' can, from above, transform the terms of our society.

A non-aligned activist

SANJIT ROY

IN late December last year (1982), I happened to glance through some papers prepared in connection with the Participation Programme of the United Nations Research Institute in Social Development (UNRISD) for a project which deals with 'Popular Participation: A Look at Non-Party Political Formations'. I looked at the names of the people involved in the exercise and needless to say I was intrigued. Harsh Sethi and Dunu, I think I know well: their approach has always been different from mine and we have agreed to disagree a number of times, but for the others I wanted to know how their minds ticked on this obviously important issue that seems to have

generated so much heat but with such little light. And, having been in this field myself, it is always stimulating to read what others think you are doing. The condition, of course, is to look at these issues from a distance and pontificate: these ground rules must not be questioned. So be it.

When committed aligned intellectuals start looking at non-party political formations and conducting post-mortem exercises, then it becomes even more interesting. We read statements like: Action Groups (AGs) have expressed a lack of confidence in the government and its agencies in promoting development with justice (true); AGs feel that the political parties too are not capable of bringing about any change in the foreseeable future in spite of their declarations and manifestos (true); AGs are re-examining their own relevance (not true); AGs are doubting their continued significance (certainly not true); the groups which are exciting any interest are the groups which have acquired a political character to some degree...who have developed a political awareness and have a programme for challenging State power but not to capture it (true/not true); the way AGs are going about defining and organising 'peoples' movements' indicates a direction towards achieving a change in the form of rule. It cannot be by itself a movement for social transformation because the word 'people' blurs class as a reality and as a category. It attempts to blunt class struggles in practice. The result of this blunting is a continuation and reinforcement of bourgeois hegemony, a perpetuation of the subjugation of the proletariat.

All these big and vague words being used are not mine. Nor are they used by many non-party political groups; of that I am sure. But I am just quoting some excerpts from their documents to show how many such groups will not be able to recognise themselves and the work they are doing when hard core political language is used to define, characterise, explain and reflect on social change. It is said that the basic fallacy is in not recognising who we are talking about. The

groups are composed of individuals who do not come from the toiling masses in the country. Fact: no doubt about that. But for intellectuals to make such an observation implies that they can recognise who they are talking about in spite of not coming from the toiling masses which is as conceited as it is presumptuous. Whatever makes them think that non-party political formations do not know what they are talking about.

Perhaps the same language is not being used, perhaps the same smoothness with which ideological jigsaw puzzles can be sorted out is not evident, perhaps they do not have the verbal tools to have solved all the intangible problems of the world (the rural poor included) but in their own hesitant, unconventional way the groups recognise who they are talking about. And when they do start discussing such issues, simple words are used that cannot have two meanings. We have a vested interest in using words which are as vague and open as possible: Einstein was right when he said if ideas and thoughts cannot be conveyed in simple language, you yourself have not understood them. Can we do without the jargon please?

None of these non-party Action Groups will agree openly and publicly but each one in its own way is involved in the political process. Where people are involved, where changing attitudes is the crucial issue, where activities (health education, hand pump, employment generation) are used as tools to test the system by setting an example, it is a programme, indirect and far removed, of developing political awareness. It is considered a challenge by people who represent the State at the village level. For many reasons, largely strategic, they must declare and remain non or anti-political.

Anyone who has worked in the field long enough will understand what I am saying. Even if AGs themselves are not aware of it, their non-controversial actions and programmes are leading to a process which should affect peoples'

minds. Such a process should not be taken lightly. It is in action all the time. Its effect can be felt any time or perhaps never. Often it is not related. A protest in a village over minimum wages can be traced back to a theme in a puppet show three months old. A mini-agitation over the starting of a school may have been the result of a defunct adult education class in a village 10 kms away. A group of villagers demanding a source of safe drinking water may have got their idea from members of another gram panchayat who were told in a tea shop how they got their hand pump. These processes involve people: the implications are political.

Our post-mortem experts who seem to find historic explanations for the role of Action Groups as it exists today are not inclined to see it this way. From a reconstruction of history which can be put into slots, it is possible to look into the future and imagine and conceive slots as if men and groups behave predictably all the time. A tragic fallacy. The analysis is brilliant but in the final reckoning, does it help Mahatma Gandhi's last man? Politics as an individual effort is pointless, says Dunu Roy. It is only when politics permeates mass mobilisation itself that it will become a vital force for social transformation. But, surely, the mass consists of individuals and the first step to getting through to one man needs to be taken. I submit that even a charity and development group is a non-party political group because it deals with individual people and is involved in attitudinal change.

The difference is that members of such groups may not have an analytical and critical mind, but let it not be forgotten that revolutionaries have been born from such sedate and conservative surroundings just as the gods have failed for many people who thought it was possible to change society through other means. I concede that the latter sounds infinitely more attractive, but the number of burnt out cases floating around among the intelligentsia and even among non-party political formations is a sad testi-

mony to the fact that solutions can also lie elsewhere.

According to Ajit Muricken of the Centre for Social Reconstruction, Madras, the Action Groups view poverty and misery, exploitation and oppression as an historical reality. Political parties of all varieties (our Marxists in India defy classification) hold power by exploitation, oppression and fear. Presumably, this also is an historic reality: the ends justify the means.

If Action Groups have strategies of their own — charity and development being two obviously disgusting ways—tools of generating a different sort of awareness, then our committed, aligned intellectuals get into a flap. We are not playing fair, they say. These activities are dismissed as reformist, do gooder attempts which can never solve the basic problems confronting society. This sort of work defuses tensions and delays the much awaited revolution. Development oriented Action Groups are supposedly shying away from political involvement but, as I have mentioned earlier, this is far from the truth.

Tensions lead to change; we do not deny that. There is ample scope and opportunity to use tensions for generating awareness among people. The very enforcement of the Minimum Wages Act, the Protection of Civil Rights Act, the Migrant Labour Act can create tensions and many Action Groups see this as one way of promoting political education. Get the government to move, register cases and see if the system responds, flood the lower courts with cases so that something gives and people learn from this experience. If this is not challenging the State, what is? But we have rejected this approach without trying it and testing it to the full.

The system needs to be prodded, it needs to be given a shock once in a while and it needs to be exposed for the people's sake and shown how vulnerable it is to pinpricks from inside. Mass movements start like this, activists from totally inconceivable backgrounds are born like this and hard core revolutionaries are also tamed and bought over by the Establishment in the

process. This also is an historic reality. Yes?

When we talk of mass movements with political implications on political parties, why do we forget that the preparation takes time. It could click and, sometimes, in spite of all the indications of a momentous occasion in the offing, it ends with a whimper. Non-party political groups have their own dynamics and pace. It does not need impractical and theoretical people; with a vested interest in studying social and political phenomena from a distance, to push them forward.

Almost all the background papers start by saying that the Action Groups are not on trial and the purpose is not to sit in on judgement and pronounce any final evaluation. Having said what effective and important work they are doing, the contributors then proceed to do precisely the former in political language which suggests that they know what is happening to you, they know why you all are not being able to get anywhere and it is because you come from a different background that you cannot possibly appreciate, let alone understand, the problems of the toiling masses. So, why are you doing all this to delay the revolution? It is being unfair to the poor, you are preventing them from getting the good things of life. Without suffering and pain and injustice the poor will never get to demand their rights or understand power. Non-party political groups are in fact doing more harm than good in the name of development by doing the things they are. Change — or perish.

I have simplified their arguments to the point of absurdity because, in fact, that is what it sounds like to me. My experience in the villages, perhaps limited when compared to the vast experience of those who have written the papers for discussion, has been that there is no one way of looking at the problem. Every approach and method needs to be tried. One group may look at it as class struggle but another, in an entirely different way, may achieve the very objectives which the first group could well spend a lifetime trying without success. But, the

pace at which these non-party political groups work must be their own.

At some point of time, many Action Groups lose sight of their original objectives, and for very valid reasons. If they have it in them and they are concerned about the way they are drifting, and the group is strong enough to take steps to change it, then leave it to them: The last thing they require is someone from outside to pontificate and point out the weaknesses they themselves know. But if they decide to opt out and they want to follow the safe way; the longer way perhaps, then we are not the ones to shout 'chicken'.

I have known people who talk big and are gutless when it comes to action. There are many armchair activists and well settled revolutionaries sitting in Delhi and Bombay and elsewhere, who have sold themselves to a comfortable life style, shouting revolution. There are others who are not prepared to challenge the State and make the system work from where the action is, but study others doing it in their own way, do research and make a name for themselves at a macro-level and travel widely and know all the answers. We have nothing to say about them. Living off the land, raking in all the perks and comforts is not delaying the revolution. Only Action Groups are. It should be interesting to study these people who spend their lives giving importance to theoretical models and words.

Why are they analysing Action Groups critically without looking at themselves. Loosely considered, there are organisations and institutes that survive on our charity. If we did not exist in the field, they would have nothing to study, no research grants, no one writing voluminous papers, no one making a name for himself and getting a lucrative job in the ILO, no one travelling around the world dishonestly representing Action Groups in the field and becoming their spokesman. There is no limit to deceit. This is the way they are ushering in the revolution and yet they have the audacity to suggest that Action Groups are doing pre-

cious little to bring about social change in the villages. I can anticipate their answers. They will say that they have nothing against Action Groups, that its the political parties that say this and they are just voicing their thoughts. Yes?

The tragedy is that when a living organisation is being dissected which does not see the problem as class struggle, it is taken for granted that it is dead. So what if it is doing charity work. Maybe all the workers there are activists at heart but they do not know how to give their thoughts a tangible expression. Who knows? But how can they be written off? Yes, many people are in the development field without any understanding of the political environment, without any idea of the historic realities which I keep reading about — does it matter? Is it so important for them to know? Is it not enough that they want to try?

At the village level, it is difficult to unscramble the difference between political and development work. Some use development for awareness work, some see the difference and use it to create tensions, some are just blind to it because they do not want to see it. No one is not aware of the political processes in development.

Let it be said that intellectuals in the urban areas tend to read too much into a situation or use their ingenuity to manufacture issues that are just not there. This exercise in mental masturbation is their prerogative to be sure, but have they ever stopped to wonder whether they are not reading too much between the lines? Action Groups which use words like 'peoples participation', 'communication', 'development', 'mass movements' have their own version of what they mean. Why must those tally with the others? Why must there be only one version to these words — nothing sacrosanct about them. Action Groups have never said or claimed that they could put water on fire. They are not interested in taking over State power: challenging it is enough. It is nobody's wish to spread to all the 600,000 villages of India: if in the villages where we are working,

however small in number, we can bring about a significant change, that should be more than enough. If Action Groups, in their own way, are concerned in challenging and changing the leadership in the area and something in that direction does take place, then it needs to be encouraged. With the resources at their disposal, with the people manning the organisation all having different views, it is necessary that they do not take on too much. It could threaten their own existence. It would be counter-productive.

Take Tilonia's case. We encourage dissent. We encourage young people to fulfill their beliefs. We are in a democracy and everyone is entitled to their own way of looking at the problems and adopting methods totally different from the way Tilonia thinks. But this is no reason why they cannot be part of the organisation. We have centres in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and Delhi and all the young men and women controlling these rural based projects think differently. When we meet once in four months it is to discuss experiences, problems, programmes and how we can work together, not why we are different or that one's own way is the best way. Each of these Centres are independent, autonomous and free of influences from each other.

The situation in the rural areas is grim. When we write about it — apparently pessimistic, depressing and sad — the impression people get in the urban areas is that there is very little one can do about it. But there is a lot that can be done and that is why we are still in this field. One should then not whitewash the reality just to sound cheerful. The only political reality we see is how the politician oppresses and exploits the people for his own selfish ends. May be, socio-economic realities are connected to this issue but I am certainly not going to do nothing except wait for the revolution to come while people are starving and the poor are getting poorer because of government intervention. In the intellectual's eye, I may not have understood the problem. But, thank God for that.

Organisational health

ALI BAQUER

AS countries become industrialised, an ever-increasing number of their working population depends for its livelihood, as well as its survival, on artificially created organisations. And as organisations grow in number, size and complexity, in terms of their structure and functions, an ever-increasing number of managers occupy positions of importance. The activities of the managerial class then begin to determine the quality of our lives. The primary aim of this article is to argue that the advancement of civilization depends more on the humaneness of our social organisations and less on the efficiency of their management. The better the behaviour of those who work within organisations, the more civilized the society. I believe that in most of our organisations sufficient opportunities already exist for the managers and workers to learn from and with each other the scientific art of improving the overall effectiveness of organisations. The exercises sustaining autonomous learning are born out of daily events experienced by organisations.

The term 'organisation' is currently used by both experts and laymen in many different ways. There are some scholars who even claim that

since there are so many different organisations, each with its own structure and functions, no single coherent definition of organisations can be offered. For the purpose of this article I am content with the definition offered by Max Weber who studied organisations within his theory of authority structures. Of the three pure types that he suggested, ('charismatic', 'traditional' and 'rational-legal'), I am interested in the third type. Weber labelled it 'bureaucracy' and considered it 'rational' because it was expressly designed to achieve specific objectives. He called it 'legal' because its authority was exercised by means of an impersonal and well-defined set of rules.

Weber regarded the 'rational-legal' organisation as the most dominant feature of our times as well as the most efficient of all institutions. He was convinced that this type of organisation had the capability of attaining 'definitely given and practical ends' by deploying 'an increasingly precise calculation of means'. It would have pained Weber to know that within five decades of his death, his bureaucracy would become synonymous with inefficiency, excessive record-keeping, vulgar display of authority, red-

tape and corruption, amongst other things.

Before I went to the United Kingdom and lived and worked there and after my return to India I have heard responsible people say, and not always in nostalgic terms, that the way organisations were run by the British during the Raj was efficient, just and without corruption. On the basis of my personal experiences of these two countries I can say that such comparisons are naive, inaccurate, servile and misleading. Not only are the organisations of British India and post-Independence India similar in their weaknesses and strengths, but the organisational culture of modern Great Britain and modern India has a lot in common. It is perhaps in the nature of the beast that its social pathologies multiply and their real remedies defy description.

Why do so many people in India and Great Britain believe in the glory of the British bureaucracy in her colonies? Apart from all the very clever theories relating to the political and economic expansion of British Imperialism, and those relating to the virtues of Protestant ethics, the one simple explanation could be the existence of the 'stretch factor'. It enabled the British rank and file, no matter how modest their station in life or how limited their education and intelligence, to put a few extra inches to their natural height. The stretch factor provided the ordinary workers in the British organisations of that time with abundant opportunities for self-realization and self-fulfilment. With the shrinking of the Empire, the stretch factor has disappeared and with it have gone all those qualities associated with it in those who worked in the organisations.

It would be quite safe to assume that, even today, if any organisation could provide its workers with a sense of identity and purpose, with pride in belonging to it and with dignity to carry out its tasks, the workers would definitely respond in a positive manner. We have been supplied with far too many illustrations of deep pessimism about

bureaucracy and none about the potential which organisations do have to transform themselves socially, culturally and even spiritually. As we have been brainwashed to rely solely on doctors, medical services, hospitals and chemicals to keep ourselves healthy, so also have we been trained to depend on the management consultants and their sophisticated hard and soft techniques to run our organisations. Any one who tells us that we are capable of looking after our own organisations is dismissed by us as a simpleton.

During my stay in the United Kingdom I had directed two major projects on the services for the mentally retarded. The first one lasted four years and focussed on the problems of coordination between various professionals. I examined the services for the mentally retarded with the participation of those who provide and receive services. The research outcomes surprised most of us but mainly those professionals who had believed, until then, that the services for these helpless human beings were not too bad in Britain. After a systematic enquiry into hundreds of cases, we collectively discovered that the services for the mentally retarded, as they were being provided by various government and voluntary agencies, produced grievances, discrepancies, contradictions, injustices and a series of other disappointments.

This was not all. We discovered that, in the background of most of these administrative pathologies, there were extremely rigid procedures which inhibited experimentation and killed the initiative of the staff. One of the hospital superintendents, for example, had served in India in the 1940s. His style of running a hospital for the mentally handicapped in England in the 1970s had not changed a bit from the days when, as a young man, he had seen 'countless bodies of dead Indians piled up on the pavements of Dacca' during the 1942 famine. One could not help feeling sorry for his subordinate doctors, nurses, other supporting staff and the patients of his hospital. I almost felt even more sorry for those Indians who had to suffer him during the Raj. His hospital was one of the

most depressing ones because in his experience of over thirty years he had not changed and had not realised the importance of the 'human factor' in running the organisations he was placed in charge of.

The hospital superintendent mentioned above is no more than one representative of a management style which unfortunately is not too unfamiliar in other organisations and in other countries. Such managers are almost text book illustrations of the uncharitable characteristics revealed as soon as they reach a position of authority. They constantly humiliate their subordinates and colleagues, multiply their enemies within the organisation by repeating how terribly good they are. They blame those who do not obey the rules. They blame those who do not work long hours. They suspect that other workers have no commitment. They destroy the morale of the whole organisation. They do not understand how important it is to integrate the workers in their organisation. They do not know that *the success of an organisation depends, to a large extent, on the quality of the informal pattern of social network and not on the adherence to rules and display of authority*. They do not know that their subordinates and colleagues are, in fact, not inferior but capable of turning the sick and anxiety-ridden organisations into much happier institutions.

The middle-aged English hospital superintendent must have his counterparts in India who as second-rate bosses spend all their energies to make and prove their subordinates third-rate. A leader who is unwilling to learn from experience and ready to ignore the intelligence and dignity of his workers, not only destroys an organisation but also destroys himself. Such destruction is totally unnecessary and avoidable. The important thing to remember is that authority, explicit or implicit, coercive or persuasive, is being universally questioned. The older forms of command and obedience are undergoing change. Those who work in organisations must understand this and then make an effort to find out how hostility could be transformed into comradeship,

routine into initiative, alienation into cooperation.

The basic question raised in this article is whether or not the learning abilities of a bureaucracy can be encouraged to contribute to the better management of the organisation, including its improved efficiency, effective use of resources, quicker achievement of objectives and harmonious inter-action between the workers and the managers. There are some who are so disheartened by the widespread criticism of bureaucracy that they suggest that it should be abolished. I maintain that even an inefficient and unfriendly bureaucracy is better than no organisation at all. Besides, we would have to depend on bureaucracy to demolish bureaucracy and bureaucracies know only how to multiply themselves. They regard suicide as the greatest sin.

Opposed to the pessimists are the management experts, with extremely sophisticated techniques of improving organisations and with ideas clothed in a language fit for the ears of the angels. They offer salvation if, and only if, the organisations follow the path shown by them. And some organisations do pay exorbitant fees for the highly specialised skills of the modern saviours and tread the path advised by them. But sooner or later, they discover that the path leads nowhere and their guides have moved to other organisations. The organisational remedies hinted at in this article do not rely on the shining armour of the management consultants or on the exclusive orientation courses for the top managers of affluent organisations. They depend on a deep appreciation of the emotional and human quality of relationships between the members of an organisation more than on the importance of the logic of efficiency, cost-effectiveness and adherence to rules. This approach is independent of experts.

Such an approach to organisational learning is particularly important in India because attacks on bureaucracy have become a regular feature of our country. These attacks are being made by the experts of organisational behaviour and laymen alike. And when the 'high pundits' and the 'untouchables' of the organisational culture get united in

questioning bureaucracy, then it is only prudent not to ignore their voices, whatever might be the confident explanations whispered in the boardrooms. Particularly, the grassroots' challenge, if ignored or misunderstood, could shake up the very fabric of Weber's Super Organisation. The anger of the common man is already very high at the apparent inability of the faceless, and perhaps heartless, bureaucracy to deal effectively with a range of social pathologies (crime, corruption, communalism, bride-burning, child-abuse and scores of others).

Solutions to problems of organisations, however complex, must be essentially *social* in nature. The search for such solutions must be made at the place of work, and not in ivory towers. All those who depend on an organisation — as managers, workers, consumers, policy makers, researchers, and consultants — must actively help each other in searching for the most appropriate answers to their specific problems. It has been successfully demonstrated that the recovery of a patient is often faster if he is involved in learning about the causes of his illness and cooperates with the healing professions in his own treatment. This is even more true of organisations.

The 'rational-legal' organisations are set up to deal with a series of tasks: grim or pleasant, simple or complicated, attractive or frightening, short-term or long-term. In order to carry out these tasks, organisations depend on a wide-range of professional skills, either available within or accessible outside. Coordination of various sections of professional services has become an extremely important and highly delicate exercise in the handling of human relationships. The responsibility for coordination is usually assigned to certain officers and committees. It should, however, be realised that the responsibility for the smooth running of an organisation, including its coordination, should be collectively shared by all who work in it. Otherwise we end up with a familiar situation where all members of an organisation spend their energies in defending themselves when things go wrong, and things do go wrong.

If members of an organisation can be encouraged to learn from their routine mistakes, then it is highly likely that similar mistakes would be avoided in the future. But organisations await major disasters to question their own methods, approaches, skills and functions. A *learning process which is triggered off by a common everyday failure is less threatening than the report of an enquiry commission*. It is no longer enough that the leaders of an organisation know how to resolve problems. For the solutions to be worthy of implementation, it is essential that all those affected by the solutions must be involved in arriving at them.

Appeals for organisational learning, such as this article, can easily be dismissed or caricatured. They can also be understood as political activity aimed at mobilising the grassroots for direct action. But such appeals can also be seen as genuine efforts to create partnerships. There appears to be a widespread threat to authority structures in most organisations all over the world. The legitimacy of telling others what they should do is no longer as clear-cut as it was during the British Raj. The experts are seen placing their bets on the establishment and therefore it would not be surprising that they would have nothing to contribute to the changes that are taking place. Trained in laboratory conditions, they often announce their insights into the dynamics of a social event after the events have taken place. And even then their language is well guarded and they keep escape routes open.

A number of very sophisticated theories of students' unrest, for example, were offered by scholars after the violent confrontations of the French students with their authorities in May 1968 in the streets of Paris. These theories did not emerge a day or even a week before these unprecedented occurrences. Similarly, a number of articles, expressed in very impressive social and political science jargon, were published in the national press after the students of the Jawaharlal Nehru University had stoned the houses and properties of their professors

living in the campus. As a resident of the JNU campus, I would have been grateful if the 'writing on the wall' had been shown to me before the unfortunate events of May 11, 1983. Hardly any one had suggested in 1968 in Europe or in 1983 in Delhi that these events, stormy as they no doubt were, could be viewed as opportunities for both sides to learn from each other and with each other. Indeed, after the confrontations, and more so because they were violent, the two sides adopted an even more rigid outlook and views. The deadliest enemy of reaching an understanding is the cynicism with which the two opposing sides view each other.

Most workers in organisations personally know of things or forces which adversely affect the quality of service provided or which block the achievement of objectives. If members of an organisation could at least be encouraged to share their experiences with their fellow workers, then the lesson learned from such exercises would not only help towards improving the effectiveness of organisations but would also give the workers greater satisfaction with their jobs. But most members of organisations show a reluctance to learn from their own experiences.

When I was examining the experiences of the men and women who had got themselves sterilized during the Emergency, I was informed by a senior family planning official, nearing his retirement, that it would be very difficult for me to trace the failures of sterilization as the recording procedures of his department specifically excluded registration of complaints. Most organisations are so confident of themselves that they do not even consider any alternative to a situation of absolute victory. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that organisations consistently ignore opportunities for learning from their routine failures. There is, however, a growing trend in some countries (now even in India) to take legal action against organisations for their mistakes and there is also a growing awareness of the many benefits of the politics of direct action (what is fashionably called 'participation'). These developments have the poten-

tial to force organisations to learn from their failures and achievements alike.

I am suggesting that such organisational learning, from constructive experiences as well as from 'horror' stories, should be an ongoing and regular activity of each organisation. It should be the responsibility of the leaders of organisations to create opportunities for their members to look at their own activities and those of others placed in similar situations. Such collective exercises of self-understanding and self-analysis prepare organisations and their members for the challenges of the future. Our organisations are what our thinking makes them. The time is now approaching when we must change not only our thoughts but also ourselves and seriously review our understanding of the delicate, and at times explosive, relationship of command and obedience.

Organisations are so well protected by their own cultural values that no questions are raised, during normal circumstances, about the objectives or the performance of the organisation. Some interest in the functioning of the organisation is shown when it is expected to yield even greater success, like, for example, at the time of the family planning campaigns. Or questions about the organisation are raised when a major, but avoidable, disaster has occurred and public outcry is expected (like an aircrash or fire in a multistorey building which has taken dozens of lives). Given this type of organisational culture, what opportunities are needed to put into motion the process of learning which this article has advocated and who would be the beneficiaries?

'Know thyself' is not a mystical or spiritual or religious message. The importance of this oft repeated and systematically ignored, advice is as relevant in the industrialised societies as it is in the developing countries. Individuals as well as groups, secular organisations as well as religious orders, are periodically advised that in order to change for the better they must learn about themselves. Those who are genuinely interested in really improving

human beings or organisations and are not governed by motives of profitability, suggest that in order to improve we do not require new religious creeds, new management techniques, new set of functions and new structures but we only need an awareness that there is enough experience and wisdom available for people to change themselves.

But, this desire to act must come from within. *If an organisation does not encourage its members to think independently and insists on telling them what to do, then the organisation cannot expect its workers to be involved, committed and satisfied.* People learn most effectively from their own responsible experience. They change their values, perceptions and attitudes if they are given the responsibility of solving the problems that confront them. This answer to organisational problems is so simple that it can be easily ignored. I feel that most of the ills facing organisations are the inevitable consequences of the somewhat excessive use of authority.

A number of those who reach the higher levels of an organisation are also those who worship success, and they define success in terms of their own motivations, perceptions, training, ambitions and personality. Since the room at the top is always limited, most organisations conceal within them a sizeable number of persons who feel frustrated, unhappy and alienated. Moreover, the complexity of organisations make them depend on a number of different professions. Workers belonging to diverse disciplines often think in terms of loyalty to their professions and not to the organisations they work for. The workers are also reduced to knowing their organisations from a narrow point of view only. Attachment to only one dimension of a multifaceted organisation robs them of the will to co-operate with others. Their jobs, over a period of time, become so very standardized and dull that they lose the initiative they may once have had.

The continued indifference of the management to recognise their capacity to contribute to the well-being

of the organisation makes them perform at an extremely low level. Once their pride in their work goes, they prefer to adhere to spiritless rules and harsh procedures. Since their jobs are secure, and their annual increments are guaranteed they seldom worry about the countless ways in which they fail every day. My experience, based on empirical research on organisational behaviour, is that most workers are quite willing to do their best to follow up a sterilized patient's post-operative complications provided they are encouraged by their authorities to do so. If the latter are interested only in pushing the figures up of the number of men sterilized in a single day, then the surgeon would keep operating until his fingers became so numb that he would be unable to hold his achievements' trophy.

I have no doubt that the endless, dull and repetitive march of organisational clockwork can be substituted by a meaningful self-awareness of the objectives of organisation and the appreciation by the workers of each other's role in it. Bureaucracy existed before Max Weber placed it on a pedestal and it will survive pressures for change, remedies offered by experts and high technology with countless promises for the future. It is, however, essential not to overlook the opportunities for continuous and autonomous learning. *The renewal of organisations must be closely linked with an informal process of self-development.* We know enough about the behaviour of adults to understand that men learn only when they want to learn; they learn because they realize that their troubles would increase if they did not act; they learn in the company of others like themselves; in trying to understand their problems they also understand themselves better. It is these simple processes of learning that hold promise for organisations which want to become humane and healthy. Taking action, particularly collective action, is more important than talking about action. Autonomous learning can be effective only in an organisation where members have been freed from the constraints of authority and are given the responsibility to resolve the problems which confront them

The debate on abortion

VEENA DAS

THE contemporary moral debate on abortion has been conducted primarily in terms of arguments that follow from rival premises about the nature of man and society. Although the premises are presented as examples of critical thinking, universalizable for all human societies, they are often mutually incomensurable. This seems to me the result of their epistemic status as 'self-evident' truths. It may, therefore, be useful to examine these premises in order to determine how far their claims to the status of universal truths, arrived at through critical thinking on moral issues, may be defended as against the position that they simply constitute the philosophical presuppositions common to western cultures.

The first argument that we may discern in this debate is conducted in terms of rights. Those who support the mother's unconditional right to abortion argue that it is possible to define a certain set, the members of which have a right to their own persons including their own bodies. This set is variously defined as a set of human beings, a set of persons, or a set of human beings with consciousness. Now, a woman can be shown to be a member of this set, howsoever it may be defined. Since the embryo and later the foetus is part of her body, a woman's right to abort is included in her right to body integrity.

A woman's unconditional right to abort can only be supported on the condition that the embryo/foetus can be excluded from the set in

which the woman is included. Hence we have a curious situation in which those who believe in the unconditional right to life of the embryo/foetus also base themselves on the same arguments as their opponents. They argue that since the embryo or the foetus is a potential member of the set of which the woman is already a member, it has an unconditional right to life and denying it this right amounts to a wanton act of killing.

This framework is not particularly suitable for discussing the moral aspects of abortion, for whichever permutation and combination of rights that we evoke, and whatever the credentials by which one comes to acquire these rights, there are bound to be border-line cases to which discriminatory criteria would have to be applied. For example, whether we define the foetus as a potential human being, a person, or a human being with the potential of acquiring consciousness, there is always room for debate on whether the discriminatory criteria have been correctly applied and whether the boundary should be shifted to include either new categories or exclude certain categories.

If, for instance, one denies the foetus the right to life on the ground that only human beings with consciousness have a right to life, then one is faced with the problem that infanticide may also be defended by applying the same criterion. Similarly, people who have temporarily lost their consciousness may also be denied the right to life. On the other hand, if the foetus has the right to life because it has the potentiality to grow into a human-being with consciousness, then one would have to extend the same right to categories of beings who show evidence of having consciousness, such as animals.

The point that I am trying to make is that the construction of a boundary by means of which one may carry on the intellectual process of inclusion or exclusion of categories of beings who have credentials for rights is a *social* construction. It is not something which is given in nature and hence can be indisputably recognised and copied

in our intellectual frameworks. The trouble with a concept like moral agency (constructed on whatever basis) is that it admits of variations in a manner that can be quite dangerous in the construction of a moral universe, smuggling in criteria of power from the back-door, as it were.

Due to the difficulties pointed out above, most philosophers tend to take a middle position on the right to abortion. They argue that a woman has rights over her body, and the foetus has rights over its life. However, due to the natural facts of conception and pregnancy, the rights of each may be seen to be constrained by the other. For instance, the whole debate on when the foetus becomes viable may be seen as an attempt to define that moment in the process of pregnancy when the woman's right to her body is completely subordinated to the right of the foetus over his life.

Conversely, there are instances when the right of the foetus over his life may be seen to be completely constrained by the right of a woman to preserve her body-integrity. For example, many philosophers who take a middle-of-the-road position argue that a woman has an unconditional right to abort a foetus if it is a result of rape, for in this case her body-integrity has been so violated that the woman's right to her body takes precedence over the right of the foetus over his life.

If we review the theories which emphasize the mutual constraints exercised by the woman's right over her body *versus* the right of the foetus over his/her life and body, one common factor stands out. This is that the entire discussion is conducted in terms of the autonomy and separation of the individual. The individual is conceived in these theories, not only as an empirical agent of actions but also as the smallest isolate of human societies which is not further divisible and as a total moral universe in himself. In this view, man is first placed in *nature*, and has natural rights over his life, liberty, person and possessions. Restrictions over these rights come from the process of bringing men into relationships

with each other in order to form society.

One could postulate an opposite view in which man is first defined as a *social*, or *cultural* being, having rights in common with members of social groups and acquiring individual rights only through a process of *individuation*. It seems to me that the language appropriate for discussing the ethics of abortion, is the language of interdependence, taking the interspace between individuals as its basic isolate rather than their separation.

The overwhelming fact about the mother and the foetus is the complete dependence of the foetus on the body of the mother and not its separation. It is not as if the foetus is drifting around the world and is then invited to come into the mother's body on the basis of contract! The relation between the mother and the foetus, I am emboldened to suggest, may be viewed as a natural symbol of interdependence and invites us to develop an ethics of interdependence that would be far more relevant to the modern world than the ethics of the separation and autonomy of individuals.

The morality of abortion has been given a new dimension by some who argue that the question cannot be framed in terms of the woman's right to abort. Rather, it raises the whole question of procreative choice. This position is consistent with the view that the individual is the final arbiter of his or her destiny. In the domain of sexuality and procreation, the individual is free to choose his or her mode of sexuality and the choice of whether or not to have children ultimately vests with the woman. The argument is made much more compelling by pointing out that abortion is sought most often by women who have been sexually abused, deserted by their male partners or live in family situations where their financial and other responsibilities to present members of their families make them extremely apprehensive of taking on the fresh responsibility of taking on a new child.

There are several strands in this argument which need to be separated. First is the conceptual impor-

tance of the category of *choice*. It seems to me that the most vocal supporters of a women's unconditional right to abort on the grounds that the procreative choice rests with her, have paid insufficient attention to the problem that may be described as the inverse of the right to abort. This is the problem of exercising one's choice to have as many children as one wants.

On the face of it, one might argue that a woman should have the freedom to have as many children as she likes. However, the moment we introduce problems of limited resources and obligations to future generations, it becomes clear that freedom to choose is limited by some notions of collective welfare, however defined. In this case, the welfare of future generations who may have to face a depleted earth if present generations do not put a limit to their freedom to choose may be at stake.

Thus, the sanctity of choice may not be regarded as the ultimate principle by which a woman's unconditional right to abort may be defended. It is urgent that moral philosophers evolve a theory of abortion which includes the issues we have discussed here, for even when we accept the principle of limits to the freedom to choose, it is not at all clear as to who has the right to impose these limits. The obvious choice in an era of increasing intrusion of the State into the private lives of people seems to be the State, and yet a serious discussion is needed on the role of the State and the limits to State-power in order to make an advance into these issues.

The question of procreative choice is often discussed in terms of a dyadic pair, the mother and the foetus. Yet a discussion on the morality of abortion includes three, and not two pairs of dyadic relations. These are, the relations between a man and a woman as sexual partners, between the woman as genetrix and the embryo/foetus, and the man as genitor and the embryo/foetus. Those who emphasize the point of view that the question of abortion can be reframed in terms of the right to make procreative choice, deny that the foetus has a

similar right to choose. They argue that the rights of the foetus have been historically invented in western Christianity and were an expression of the increasing misogyny of Church authorities.

While there may be some truth in the statement that the awareness of the right to life of an embryo has been connected with movements to restrict the rights of women, the historicity of this argument cannot be evoked as ground to disprove its truth. For, one can show that the rights of many categories of people including slaves, women and children have been 'invented' in the course of history and were a result of altered socio-economic conditions.

Secondly, it seems to put an unfair burden on women to assume that the other pairs, that of a man and a woman as sexual partners, and that of a man as genitor and the embryo/foetus need not be considered in the debate on abortion. The position that one takes on the question of who has the right to control fertility cannot be unlinked with the problem of defining responsible sexuality. Yet, it is interesting to observe that in the debate on abortion, the sexuality and fertility of women is seen as linked but that of men is sought to be separated.

In the Roman Catholic position, the absolute right of the embryo/foetus to life is linked with the obligation to observe pre-marital chastity. However, responsible sexuality is never defined in this tradition to include a celibate relationship *within* marriage since that would contradict the modern western ideas about the centrality of sexual intercourse in the definition of conjugal love.

It seems to me that the nature of celibacy needs a serious discussion and one need not be deterred by the definition of sexuality as the realm of play, spontaneity and pure communitas in the modern conceptions of marriage from which arises the suspicion of marital relationships based upon celibacy. One has to remember that modern definitions of a good marriage may be contrasted with other definitions that emphasize the importance of restraint in sustaining a marital relationship as,

for instance, in the writings of Gandhi. The point is that when we consider the question of who controls a woman's fertility as linked with the question of what is responsible sexuality, we are led to enquire into the nature of the whole set of role-relationships that make up the domain of sexuality and fertility, and not only that of a single dyadic relationship therein.

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The category of choice plays such an important role in our thinking today that much of medical technology proceeds on the assumption that it should increase the choices available to the individual. For example, today a woman may choose not to enter into a heterosexual relationship and yet may go through the entire processes of conception, pregnancy and childbirth through artificial insemination. Development of semen banks has made it possible for her to select the genitor of her child according to his IQ, athletic prowess, or racial identity.

Similarly, a woman may decide in advance whether to go ahead with a pregnancy in which the child may be born with a congenital defect. She may even abort foetuses of a particular sex selectively. It seems to me that this increasing emphasis on choice has often resulted in heightening the tensions inherent in a given society. Two examples may be given here. In societies where the parents feel a certain ambivalence towards girls, the availability of medical technology to abort foetuses of a certain sex selectively might tilt this ambivalence towards dislike.

In Indian families this ambivalence towards female babies manifests itself in the following manner. On the one hand, a male infant is more welcome on birth than a female one. More resources in health and education are invested by parents in male children than female children. Yet, as a daughter grows she comes to receive affection and love, and may grow to occupy an important position in a profession or is given a fair share of the family's resources in the form of marriage prestations. Many anthropological descriptions of family relationships show that as parents grow older they may feel themselves closer to daughters than

to sons. This complex and delicate web of relationships may be severely disturbed when medical technology makes it possible to exercise choices in areas on which control was not earlier possible.

The second example that I would like to give is from medical research. If the foetus has no right to life and may be treated by a woman as part of her own body process alone, then she may have her pregnancy terminated by choice and may sell the foetus for medical research. Recent reports in newspapers suggest that the foetus may be kept alive outside the mother's body and is sometimes used for research on cosmetics. This leads to a situation in which not only is the foetus brutalized but also the mother. For the first time medical technology has made it possible not only for a woman to use her sexuality for commercial purposes but also her fertility. It seems to me that increasing the alternatives over which one can exercise choice and acquiring greater and greater control over one's sexuality and fertility may prove to be more brutalizing than submitting to a design, a *telos* that makes human existence meaningful.

The final argument that we may consider here with reference to the morality of procreative choice is that the concrete conditions under which a woman has to make the decision to abort must be considered in discussing the morality of abortion. The empirical studies on the condition of such women point to two facts. The first is that in a majority of cases the decision to abort a child is not taken casually. It causes considerable anguish. Women see the morality of the decision to abort as embedded in the concrete contexts in which the decisions are taken rather than in terms of the application of certain abstract rules of justice, universalizability, etc.

Incidentally, even when women are not very vocal in expressing their guilt and anguish at having to take a decision to abort, it would be a mistake to assume that guilt and distress are not experienced. I have noticed that difficult births in Punjab are sometimes attributed to the souls of earlier children who died as a result of a spontaneous or induced

miscarriage, stillbirth or death in early childhood. Possession rituals, or exorcism, is the means of silencing these inner demons.

The second point is that a child is born within a family which has a history and a continuity. Whereas moral philosophers treat birth as a single point event, women treat it as a part of the ongoing chain of events. The discussion on the morality of abortion would be far more meaningful if it were linked with the issue of providing supportive care for the new infant. If the family is to be solely responsible for childcare, then clearly its ability to provide care for the new infant will weigh heavily in a decision to continue a pregnancy or terminate it. If, on the other hand, the foetus has an absolute right to life, then we must define the agencies who are to be responsible to care for the infant if the mother is unable to do so. It is a sad fact that many who are concerned for preserving life in the womb have given scant attention to the question of quality of life of those who are already born and living.

The burden of my argument here is that we have been tricked by modern philosophers into thinking that the morality of abortion involves strictly the relation of a woman to the foetus. In fact this dyadic relationship is embedded into a number of relationships involving not only the responsibility of a genitor to the embryo/foetus, but also the relationship of adult men and women. Further, this arrangement of relationships involves the rest of society. Without a discussion of the responsibility of society (either through the State or other agencies) towards the embryo, the foetus, and the infant as also towards those who are charged for caring for them, a discussion on the morality of abortion is incomplete.

The final set of observations that we shall consider, relate to the consequences of permitting termination of pregnancy. The consequences may be to the foetus, to the mother, or to the wider society.

Much of medical opinion justifies termination of pregnancy if there is

a strong possibility that the health of the foetus has been impaired due to genetic or other diseases. In many countries, medical tests are regularly performed for determining the normality of a foetus in the case of older mothers so that an abnormal foetus may be aborted. This is to ensure birth of normal children. Even the vociferous defenders of right to life, often agree that it may be a more humane solution to abort a foetus likely to suffer from severe physical or mental defects rather than to allow it to live since the quality of life it is likely to lead would be extremely poor.

In this context, it needs to be pointed out that although the 'quality of life' argument bases itself on the language of facticity, in fact it is not inscribed in the nature of things that a physically or mentally retarded individual should have a poor quality of life. It is the great value placed upon individual autonomy, intelligence, and competition that makes it so self-evident to the modern world that an individual who is dependent upon others for his physical or other needs suffers from a poor quality of life.

Surely, it is not beyond the capacity of modern societies, with the great advances in technology that they have achieved, to devise means for ensuring a good quality of life to the physically or mentally handicapped. What this would require, however, is that technology should orient itself less towards the aim of controlling the characteristics of a population and more towards facilitating life-styles that may be inconsistent with individual autonomy but may be consistent with other human virtues. The greatest danger in the quality of life argument that I see is that it may open the door for eliminating other categories of 'inferior' people such as those with low intelligence, 'undesirable' racial characteristics or women.

The second kind of consequentialist argument focuses its attention on the impact of a pregnancy on the mother rather than on the foetus. Thus, termination of pregnancy may be allowed if the mother's life is in danger. According to some, the termination of pregnancy may be

considered defensible only if the mother's life is in danger while others would extend this to the mother's mental health.

Feminists of various persuasions argue that whatever the moral status of the foetus, it cannot be compared with the moral agency of a fully developed female person. Secondly, they argue, women have often to take recourse to abortion as a way of dealing with a pregnancy that results more often from carelessness in the production of contraceptives rather than just bad luck. Research, they argue, has failed to develop a hundred per cent safe contraceptive because matters relating to women's health and well-being are simply not taken as *urgent* matters.

To this argument I may add that very little thought has been given to the development of contraceptives that take into account conditions under which sexual intercourse takes place in societies where the conjugal couple do not have the privacy and intimacy that western couples enjoy. Should women be asked to pay the price for the failure of the rest of society to develop appropriate medical techniques for their health and well-being?

Supporters of the right to life argue that where a pregnancy can cause a threat to the life of a woman, her obligation to protect her own life contradicts with the right to life of the foetus. In this case we need to think of the woman as withdrawing life-support from the foetus in order to preserve her own life rather than as committing homicide. The common-sense view on the matter is that a new-born infant is not the centre of a support system of other people in the same manner as a fully grown female person is. Hence the grief felt at the loss of a foetus cannot compare with the grief at the loss of an adult female person. To my mind, this raises the whole question of why we value the sanctity of life and under what conditions are we willing to deprive a person of his life.

It needs to be remembered that in the Lockean system, on the basis of which many philosophers take the

right to life as a fundamental right, a person had an obligation to preserve his life, since the desire to survive was an expression of God's will in man rather than his own personal wish. Thus, the question as to why we consider the right to life as an inalienable one cannot be dissociated from fundamental cosmological considerations that have been swept under the carpet by modern followers of Locke. It is time that we devoted our attention to an articulation of these considerations, as also the formulation of alternative cosmologies. Only then can we provide a comprehensive framework within which these issues can be discussed.

Finally, abortion is sometimes defended as a technique of family planning. It is being extensively used in countries like China. When used as a policy instrument by the State or its agencies, the forcible termination of pregnancy raises questions about the right of the State to control the most intimate aspects of an individual's existence. It is the obverse of the right of the State to prevent individual women from demanding abortion. Both issues need to be discussed *together* within a framework of a theory of State. Yet, the very people in western countries who legislate against the right of women to demand abortion, applaud the political will in countries like China in using abortion to control their populations.

It has not been my intention in this paper to defend or oppose particular theories of abortion. Rather, I have been concerned in trying to *understand* an argument. It is striking that the discussion on moral issues relating to abortion suffers from a fragmentation of the discourse. Human beings are sought to be treated in this discourse as *locations* of decisions rather than people whose lives have a narrative continuity. A satisfactory theory would involve an articulation of a cosmology within which questions about life, sexuality, fertility and control could be discussed. It seems to me that unless we shift our emphasis from rights and utility to a consideration of virtue, such a framework will elude us for a long time to come.

Intellectuals and revivalism

O. CHINNAPPA REDDY

THE Indian scene, economic, political and cultural, can scarcely be described as heart-warming. One has only to look around, even casually, to notice the heart-breaking standard of living of the masses, the violent contrasts of poverty and plenty, the dismal illiteracy and lack of educational opportunity, the grievous technical backwardness, the regional and linguistic chauvinism, the wretched communal fanaticism, selfish casteism, the mutilated, inhibited and imposed cultural forms, the limited development of productive forces, the distortions and disequilibriums, both domestic and external, of the national economy, the structural dependence on imperialism at all levels, the chronic waste and depletion of national wealth and growth potential.

Underdevelopment is not an isolated fact, nor is it recent or accidental. It is a situation arising from the long historical process of capitalist development. It is undeniably related to the social system. True, the capitalism of underdevelopment is distinct from classical capitalism, but it is nonetheless capitalism, a dependent capitalism in which productive forces develop slowly and

unequally with marked ups and downs. Obviously, the situation cannot be altered within the capitalist framework. Obstacles to development are structural and, therefore, they can only be transcended by a radical transformation of the very social structure which has generated them.

Science, art and literature play their part in the historical process and contribute to the incessant economic and political struggles. History is made in such a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, each of which has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life. There are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant—the historical event. There is a constant interaction between the economic situation which is the basis and the various elements of the superstructure and it is as a result of the interaction of these forces that the economic movement finally asserts itself as is necessary. That is why it is said that the history of all existing society is the history of class struggles.

The present epoch is the epoch of struggle between the bourgeoisie

and the proletariat. The effect of the class struggle, sometimes apparent, often concealed, is all pervasive, touching as it does every aspect of human life, individual as well as collective. So it is that a militant struggle against imperialist forces within each country is necessary in order to conquer poverty and underdevelopment, ignorance, prejudice and superstition and to affirm the values of a truly national culture, a culture which makes it possible for the people to move towards scientific progress and the enjoyment of the arts.

Here, it is necessary to realise and understand—and this, unfortunately, the bourgeois rationalists fail to grasp—that irrationality has always been and is a powerful aid to exploitation and an effective ideological weapon to perpetuate the mental slavery of the masses and it is therefore impossible to delink the war against irrationality from the inevitable class struggle of the oppressed masses. In the ultimate analysis, the war against irrationality is part of an historic ideological struggle, 'a struggle against all systems of thought which either make the working people victims of narrow prejudices and irrational passions or condemn the people as passive onlookers of their destiny.' The war against irrationality is finally won when the class battle is won. The failure of the bourgeois rationalists to recognise the true character of the struggle against irrationality as part of the capitalist system has led them to become mere propagandists of atheism, with nothing positive to be achieved towards changing society.

Intellectuals—and by intellectuals I do not mean the 'intellectual', as defined by Paul Baran, that is, 'one who not only works with his brain rather than with his brawn but in addition gets so deeply concerned with the historical process that it permeates his thought and significantly affects his work'; I simply mean intellectuals in the broadest Gramscian sense: poets, professors and physicists, dramatists, actors and doctors, engineers and economists, journalists, writers, white collar workers, students and,

of course, lawyers and judges.

Intellectuals must recognise the true nature of the struggle and once they do so, they will see for themselves that an obvious role for them in the struggle is to prepare and equip the people to take their place in an egalitarian, scientifically progressive and genuinely cultured society by relentlessly exposing the exploitative nature of the system, the false, conservative, obscurantist-mystical and misleading philosophies and ideologies espoused by the system and by cultivating a wider perspective, a new vision and a new sense of commitment towards the great ideals of egalitarianism, scientific progress and true culture.

The bourgeois ruling class is adept at making skilful use of the various facets of the super structure. Religion and superstition have a powerful sway on the minds of a substantial section of the people of India, the great bulk of whom still vegetate in a pre-scientific age. They are a sad and long suffering people, the victims of an unjust and irrational social system in which a few flourish at the cost of many, a system which despite being inequitable, if not inhuman, has been sustained throughout the centuries by the genius of the pernicious philosophy of *karma*, a very convenient philosophy, indeed, to make the miserable masses of the country accept with resignation and without protest every kind of inequality, exploitation, degradation and misery inflicted on them.

An unjust social system is sought to be rationalised by the philosophy of *karma* and generation after generation, the people of India have been so indoctrinated by the inexorable philosophy of *karma* that it has become part of their blood. Spiritualism and the *karma*-culture have so emasculated the Indian masses and made them so resigned to what they describe as their fate that they view their poverty and their misery as but the just and inevitable reward of the misdeeds of a past, that is, a *purva 'janma'* and not the product of a totally unjust and cruel social system. Faced with every kind of exploitation in their every day life, with no hope of any change for the

better in their lifetime, the Indian masses have dangled before them the theory of *karma* and they feed upon its dead flesh to sustain themselves. To these sections of the people, religion is not only a ritual, but also a serious commitment. They dose or dope themselves with all manner of beliefs based on so-called tradition. A man can withdraw himself into his religious shell to perform innumerable ritual and religious functions; and, there is a plenitude of Yogis, Swamis and Acharyas to sustain him in that attempt. *Karma* is his defence mechanism.

In the absence of an alternative to this self-defeating defence mechanism, the mechanism will continue to flourish and we have no dearth of pseudo intellectuals ready to feed the credulity of the exploited masses. The ruling bourgeoisie is very cunning. It has not merely an army of pseudo intellectuals to do its bidding, but it makes skilful use of the mass media to influence the masses and to earn legitimacy for itself and the destructive doctrines propagated by it. I do not have to tell you how the All India Radio begins the day with 'Suprabhatam' and how the Doordarshan publicises Yoga and how the two of them together project the decadent revivalist philosophy of the pseudo intellectuals.

The vast majority of the intellectuals in India are drawn from and constitute the category of the petty bourgeoisie, instinctively sharing the attitude of that class towards capitalism and revolution. They are the products of an inherited system of education which is saturated with bourgeois ideology and a mass of reactionary ideas, prejudices, and superstitious beliefs also inherited from the past. The effect of modernisation on those who are the products of this system of education has been what the sociologists term as 'Sanskritisation' in the realm of culture and revivalism in the realm of ideology. They become the apostles and the minstrels of revivalism, to sing and to chant the glories of our great, ancient culture and heritage. Evidence is discovered by them from the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* to prove that our ancients possessed scientific knowledge rivalling and indeed more advanced than our own

and that aeroplanes and even nuclear weapons were known to the Rishis of the Vedic age.

The credulity and chauvinism of these people is astounding. They are unable to grasp the elementary processes of history and sociology that a highly developed technology could not have possibly existed in a pre-industrial society merely because some Rishis so willed it. You cannot conceive of the most intelligent prehistoric human being producing the little, sophisticated electronic gadgets of today or performing so aesthetically perfect a dance as Balasaraswati's Bharatanatyam. Instead of being the brave torch bearers of scientific knowledge, they act as defenders of tradition and superstition. Foundation stones of steel plants, nuclear stations and space laboratories are laid to the chanting of 'mantras' by Brahmin priests and to the breaking of coconuts at the precise moments chosen and declared as auspicious by Pandits and astrologers. Swamijis, Babas, Bhagwans, Maharishis, Yogis and various other vice-regents of God abound and are sought after. Literate and illiterate, rich and poor, ministers, judges, politicians, bureaucrats, professors, and even so called scientists throng for their *darshan*, prostrate themselves at their feet and receive 'vibhuti' and other token gifts from them to be worn and carried by them as blessed charms and talismans to protect them against evil and to advance their cause in mere worldly matters. Panchangams, palmists, astrologers, occultists and diviners are consulted as much by the elitist section of the people as by the illiterate.

There is a great rush to visit temples and other centres of pilgrimage to please, propitiate and offer worship and worldly goods to several major and minor gods and goddesses. If you want to win an election, if you want to become a minister, if you want success in your black market enterprises, if you want to win a case in Court, if you want a son-in-law for your daughter, you rush to Tirupati; you offer untaxed money to obtain tax free benefits. Almost all the national newspapers with perhaps the solitary and honourable exception of the *Hindu* of

Madras carry a Sunday feature on 'what the stars foretell this week'. The *Hindu* makes up for it by a daily religious discourse on the last page. In the name of Indian culture (Bharatiya Sanskriti) there is incessant talk of Yoga, Vedanta, Geethopadesa, Advaita, transcendentalism and so on. You visit the nearest bookshop, you will find it full of books on Yoga, Vedanta, etc., side by side with books on astrology, palmistry and of course, sex, marriage, Kamasutra and Harold Robbins. There is even a demand to make Sanskrit an official language of the country and to establish Sanskrit universities. These chauvinists have already secured a point and Sanskrit is one of the languages in which the news is broadcast every day by the All India Radio. All these are manifestations of revivalism which has so closely attached itself to the educated and the elite of the country.

Afew months back, I was amused to read in one of the respectable daily newspapers that 'Pranamudra' was a sure cure for heart trouble and that all you had to do was to hold your fingers in a particular way and it would act like a tablet of Sorbitrate, even better, because the cure, it seems, would be permanent and not temporary. How I wish it could be so; I wouldn't have undergone a bypass operation. Again, we often read in the weekly and monthly magazines, pathetic articles by so-called intellectuals who have discovered evidence of every modern scientific device in the *Vedas* and more exciting evidence of space travel by our ancestors. Quite absurd researches are undertaken to discover 'ancient insights into modern discoveries'. I remember reading years ago a book aimed at showing that the Mayan civilization of Central America was Hindu in origin.

All this may be amusing to read, but not quite so amusing if we realise that those who finance these projects aim at the creation of a false, irrational consciousness in the minds of the people, weaning them away from real and rational consciousness. Without drawing parallels one is reminded of Nazi medical scientists in Hitler's Germany, who tried to prove the superiority of the Aryan

to the Jewish race and the innate physical diseases which no Jew could escape.

Revivalism has made the Indian bourgeoisie and in particular the Indian intellectuals great hypocrites. They talk glibly of the great and ancient philosophy inherited by them and profess a detachment from all wordly and mundane matters but, in practice, they are greedy position-possession-power-grabbers. They will talk of things spiritual and indulge in things most material. From them have risen many sanctimonious humbugs, masquerading as spiritual leaders. They have so perverted the entire scale of values that even begging is glorified. Copious tears are shed at the sufferings of the Sita of the Puranas while they are oblivious to the existence and the sufferings of the millions of living Sitas of today's Ramayanas. As if to applaud Sita's ordeal by fire, brides are burnt for dowry. The late M.N. Roy pointed out in one of his books that we are such great hypocrites that even 'the delightful sexual lyrics of Vidyapati, Chandidas and Jayadev are interpreted as mystic accounts of spiritual elevation of an exotic communion with the impersonal God; legendary tales of the philanderings of a youthful cowherd and the delicious abandon of the milk-maids, jolted out of inhibitions by the flood of tropical springs are given a dull scriptural value and even philosophical content is read into them—mutual attraction between *jeevatma* and *paramatama*'.

Perhaps, some of you may be impressed if I quote the late Radha-Krishnan, philosopher-President. You may raise your eye-brows and say jubilantly 'here is the devil quoting the scripture'. This is what he says: 'Many of the fundamental evils of Indian society can be traced to two important factors, namely, irresponsible wealth and religious bigotry. While economic injustices are not peculiar to our country alone, religious bigotry which treats millions of our countrymen in a shameless inhuman way, and imposes senseless disabilities and inconvenience on the womanhood of the country, is a standing danger. It is the corruption of the spirit in the guise of superstition. Those

who impose those disabilities on other human beings are themselves victims of ignorance and superstition. There is such a thing as degeneration of accepted ideas. Many of them are kept going artificially even after life has left them. We must liberate ourselves from the tyranny of the dark past, from the oppression of the spectres and ghosts, from falsehood and deceit. There are millions today whose life has been rendered meaningless by social maladjustments which are sanctified by religion and they may be pardoned if they dismiss religion as a luxury which they cannot afford....It is the duty of every patriotic person to resist economic and religious tyranny.'

To go back to what I was saying, leaving alone Dr. Radhakrishnan's thoughts on religion, I wish to emphasise to you that revivalism is not an accident; it is part of the historical counter-revolutionary process. It is fostered to blur the revolutionary vision and counter the growth of the revolutionary consciousness of the people. In any pre-socialist society, the ruling class is necessarily in a minority and is, therefore, apprehensive that if the masses rationally recognise their own interests and organise themselves to change the existing social structure, they are bound to succeed, in the long run, in any conflict between the classes, by the very reason of their numbers. The ruling class has, therefore, a stake in offering diversions and substituting irrational consciousness for rational or class consciousness.

Revivalism and its products — prejudice, superstition, communalism, regionalism, casteism, etc. — are used to strengthen and fortify the existing economic and social structure rather than for the improvement or betterment of the community or the nation as such. While this is the true character of revivalism, it is often attempted to be projected under banners meant to give it a rational appearance. The process started in the days of our colonial rulers. The Englishman, Colebrooke, and the German, Max Muller, who are thought to have rediscovered the philosophy of Vedānta for the modern world, thereby

did such signal service to the British imperialist interests in India that the then Secretary of State in India handsomely acknowledged their service by saying, 'Colebrooke and Max Mueller rendered a service to the Government of India more valuable than several regiments of the army.'

There are many living Colebrookes and Max Muellers today and one may well say that today's revivalists serve the ruling classes of India more valuably than several regiments of soldiers. Some of the Swamijis and the godmen, to whom I made a reference earlier and who are the eloquent apostles of revivalism, may be quite sincere and sensitive people, who, disturbed by the spectacle of the inequities of the world, preach *dharma*, *karma* and *prema* in a naïve effort to abate these inequities; but, rest assured, they are permitted to do so as part of the 'cultural' activity of the shopkeepers of the world in an endeavour to appease the people who may otherwise rebel against their poverty, tyranny and oppression.

Isaid: revivalism often is hidden and is projected under banners of attractive and appealing colours. One must be careful and perceive revivalism for what it is. In Andhra we want to revive the glorious days of the Kakatiya and Vijaynagar empires. Two of our universities are called Kakatiya and Krishnadevaraya Universities. In Tamil Nadu the transport services are named after the Pandyan, Chola and Chera empires. In Maharashtra Sivaji is the idol and the ideal. Today in Punjab, the warrior Sikhs want to revive the glorious days of Ranjit Singh. Even our hoteliers call their hotels after Ashoka, Kanishka, Maurya, Akbar. Sure, there is nothing wrong in being proud of our past. But pride in the past should be accompanied by an understanding of history. Otherwise, disastrous results may follow.

Therefore, it has become necessary to wage a war against revivalism, religion and superstition. But it is foolish to suppose that revivalism, religion and superstition can be isolated from the economic base and fought on an intellectual basis. This is the error of the bourgeois

rationalists who are naturally inhibited by their own class limitations. Lenin wrote; 'It would be stupid to think that in a society based on the endless oppression and coarsening of the worker masses, religious prejudices could be dispelled by purely propaganda methods. It would be bourgeois narrow-mindedness to forget that the yoke of religion that weighs upon mankind is merely a product and reflection of the economic yoke within society. No number of pamphlets and no amount of preaching can enlighten the proletariat, if it is not enlightened by its own struggle against the forces of capitalism.'

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herefore, remembering that the ideological roots of revivalism, religion and superstition are embedded in the class nature of society, they have to be fought not merely by exposing their irrationality through rationalist propaganda, literature, arts and the media, but also by making it part of the revolutionary class struggle.

Friends, I have finished. I make my appeal to all of you, the intellectuals of the country, to join the oppressed classes of the country and wage a war against superstition, against prejudice, against every form of irrationalism, to adopt and practice a scientific and a rational approach to life and its problems, to preach and inculcate the scientific approach in your writings, in your speeches and by your actions and, thus, to participate in the relentless revolutionary class struggle. Let the people of India move towards a better future and a greater humanism 'where a man has emerged from the archaic ties of blood and soil, and feels himself to be the son of man, a citizen of the world, whose loyalty is to the human race and to life rather than any exclusive part of it, a man who loves his country because he loves mankind and whose judgement is not warped by tribal loyalties.' Let the new man, the new citizen of India emancipate the toiling masses from the ancient superstitions and prejudices of race, nation, class, religion, and create a universal fraternal society, every member of which will work according to his ability and receive according to his need.

Books

THE INTERNATIONAL LAW OF HUMAN RIGHTS by Paul Sieghart. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983.

OUR age has witnessed many wonderful events and breath-taking achievements. From moonshots to microchips, what passed as science fiction a few years ago has become commonplace reality. Yet, equally powerful in its potential for affecting human lives and a true wonder of the post-World War II era is the unforeseen development of human rights jurisprudence, or, to be more precise, the evolution of the International Law of Human Rights. Paul Sieghart's monumental work, *The International Law of Human Rights* is an illuminating insight into this wonder.

Before the second world war, traditional thinking in international law was that what a sovereign State did to its citizens was its own affair and it was none of the business of other States or the international community to interfere.

Besides, the general public attitude was that the whole business of 'human rights' was airy-fairy. Most lawyers thought that the very concept of human rights was woefully vague and nebulous and the idea of enforcement of human rights was quixotic. No one could have prophesied in 1930, without raising doubts about his mental equilibrium, that a judgment of the House of Lords could become the subject of scrutiny and adjudication by another tribunal — and that a European Court to boot — which would have the power to declare the judgment to be in conflict with the fundamental right to freedom of expression guaranteed under the European Convention. Poor Mr. Podsnap and his tribe of Englishmen who were 'very proud of our Constitution, Sir. It was bestowed upon us by Providence. No other country is so favoured as this country', would have been horrified at this European outrage to national honour.

All that has changed. The old dogmas and heresies have been eroded, the ghost of domestic jurisdiction has been gradually exorcised and the veil of national sovereignty has been rent. Regrettably, there are governments, like the present-day regime in Iran, which are blatant violators of human rights, and raise the bogey of interference in their internal affairs and seek shelter behind the domestic jurisdiction clause in the U.N. Charter with vehement

patriotism, so aptly described by Dr. Johnson as 'the last refuge of a scoundrel'.

Today, how a State treats its own subjects is the legitimate concern of international law. The individual is not merely an 'object' of international law. He is now a 'subject' of international law, having rights in international law *independently* of his government.

Consider what is happening in Europe at Strasbourg. The European Convention enables 250 million persons in Europe to bring before the European Commission of Human Rights allegations that their rights have been violated. Fourteen out of nineteen contracting States have accepted the optional declaration allowing this individual petition. These applications are considered by the Commission and well-founded ones are passed to the Court of Human Rights or the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for a decision on violation.

The European Commission and the European Court have made a substantial contribution to the status of the individual in the international legal system as is evident from a few examples where individuals have obtained relief against their governments. In the case of Neumeister against Austria, the Court held that Neumeister had been detained for an excessive period before trial and hence there was a violation of article 5(3) which guarantees the right to trial within a reasonable time. In the so called 'Vagrancy Cases' against Belgium, the Court concluded that there was a breach of the Convention because the applicants had no remedy open to them before any tribunal for questioning the decisions ordering their detentions.

Mrs. Airey in her case against the Irish Government agreeably learnt that the unavailability of legal aid in her attempts to achieve judicial separation from her husband was tantamount to denial of access to courts. In the inter-State case brought by the Republic of Ireland against the U.K., the Court held that the techniques of interrogation of prisoners in Northern Ireland amounted to a practice of inhuman and degrading treatment. In the Tyre case the use of birch as a means of punishment in the Isle of Man met with a similar fate.

How has this revolution been brought about? It is an horrendous thought that a person who destroyed

the basic human rights of millions and whose nation under his leadership practised the jurisprudence of terror and violence, Adolf Hitler, is in some way responsible for the firm resolve of governments to take the leap from sermonising rhetoric to positive legal measures. The civilized world was revolted by the diabolism at Dachau and the ghastly gas chambers operated by the Nazis. The fallacies of the theory of State sovereignty and legal positivism stood cruelly exposed by the anti-human laws passed and the atrocities committed under cover of legality in Nazi Germany. There was a universal determination to prevent recurrence of such barbaric acts. As Louis Henkin has perceptively observed, 'Broader law came in the wake of Hitler. The international human rights movement was born in and out of the Second World War.'

The early manifestations of the new thinking are reflected in the Atlantic Charter of 14 August, 1941, with its call for 'freedom from fear and want'; the Declaration of 1 January, 1942 by the 26 'United Nations' then fighting the Axis powers, to the effect 'that complete victory over their enemies is essential to defend life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands'; and the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals in 1944 for the establishment of the UN which would, among other things, 'promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms' — the phrase to which the San Francisco conference of the following year added the words '...for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.'

For the first time in history, States were willing to assume obligations to their own citizens which were as precisely and formally defined in many cases as the legal obligations they had hitherto undertaken towards each other under international law.

The Charter of the United Nations was a landmark in this unique legal development. Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter dealing with international economic and social cooperation require that 'All Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in cooperation with the Organisation for the achievement of...universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.'

The next historic step was taken on the night of December 10, 1948 in Paris when the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by 48 to 0. Eight countries abstained from voting; Poland, Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, the Ukraine, Yugoslavia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union.

The quick and easy passage of the Declaration was largely because it was regarded as a statement of principles and values rather than a covenant which imposed binding legal obligations on States. When the Declaration was debated in the General

Assembly, Mrs. Hansa Mehta of India, insisted that 'people must be assured that there will be adequate machinery to enforce the Bill whenever human rights are violated.' Eleanor Roosevelt who chaired the session hoped that the Declaration would be 'the Magna Carta of all mankind.'

The Declaration has now been accepted by virtually all of today's 150 States and even the European communist States which had abstained when the Declaration was approved have accepted it formally in the Helsinki Act of 1975.

Nonetheless, there were doubts as to whether the Declaration had legal force and was legally binding on the States. So the next step in the evolution of international human rights law was the preparation and passage of a covenant which embodied specific legal obligations and contained adequate machinery to enforce them.

The covenants had to struggle for birth for a good eighteen years. Fundamental differences of opinion arose about priorities and implementation. Were civil and political rights superior to social and economic rights? Or was freedom from want the most important fundamental right without which other freedoms became meaningless? As a measure of compromise it was formally agreed to produce separate covenants. One would cover economic, social and cultural rights and the other would incorporate civil and political rights. As it happened, the economic covenant was listed and came into force ahead of the civil and political covenant by two months.

This is reminiscent of the furious legal and judicial debate in India about the proper relation between Part III of the Indian Constitution, which deals with Fundamental Rights and in substance comprises the freedoms enumerated in the political covenant, and Part IV of the Constitution, which proclaims the Directive Principles of State policy, and embodies provisions more or less similar to those found in the covenant on economic, social and cultural rights. The present judicial thinking in India is that there is no conflict between these provisions, they are complementary to each other, neither being superior to the other, and together they form the core and conscience of the Constitution.

On December 16, 1966, when the vote was taken in the General Assembly on the Covenants, instead of the 48 nations which approved the Universal Declaration, more than 100 world governments said yes; none said no. With the Declaration and the two Covenants, the world had its first International Bill of Human Rights.

The Covenants however are binding on only those States which, in a separate procedure, have ratified them. Again, Article 41 of the Civil and Political Covenant and the Optional Protocol—which sets up mechanisms by which States could complain against other States and individuals could complain against

their governments — were also applicable only to those States which agreed to be bound by them.

The actual picture is this: The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights did not 'enter into force' until January 3, 1976; and as of January, 1982, 82 States had agreed to be bound by it.

The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights entered into force only on March 23, 1976; and as of January, 1982, 81 States had ratified it.

The Optional Protocol allowing individuals to make complaints against their governments met with less than unanimous approval: sixty-six in favour, two against and thirty-eight abstentions. It entered into force in March, 1976; but till January, 1982, only 34 States had accepted it.

The Government of India dragged its feet and there was considerable dilly-dallying about signing the Covenants. The writer had, in September, 1978, the privilege of leading the Indian delegation to Geneva and chairing the United Nations Seminar on National and Local Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.* Questions by delegates of several countries about India's failure to accede to the Covenants caused considerable embarrassment.

Ultimately, the Government of India under the Prime Ministership of Morarji Desai heading the Janata government acceded to both the Covenants on 27th March, 1979, subject to certain reservations. One of the reservations entered is in respect of Article 9 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which deals with the right to liberty and security of person, confers certain rights on arrested and detained persons. Article 9(5) provides an enforceable right to compensation to victims of unlawful arrest and detention. The Government of India has taken the position that under the Indian legal system there is no such enforceable right to compensation and also that the provisions of Article 9 of the Covenant will be applied in consonance with the law in India relating to preventive detention.

It is unfortunate that the Janata Government, most of whose cabinet ministers were the victims of unlawful detention during the Emergency, still thought it necessary to enter a reservation in respect of the most basic and elementary right of liberty and security of person. India has also not yet accepted the Optional Protocol.

Regional associations of governments have adopted comprehensive human rights agreements outside the United Nations. The European Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms came into force on 3rd September, 1953. As noticed, the European Commission and the European Court of Human Rights have developed substantial and impressive human rights jurisprudence. Their decisions and judgments enjoy a deservedly high

reputation and have led to important changes in the laws and practices of the member States.

In 1959 an Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was established. In 1969 the members adopted the American Convention of Human Rights and it entered into force on 18th July, 1978. The signatories to this Convention include USA, Mexico, most of the Latin American and Caribbean States with the conspicuous absence of Argentina and Brazil. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has its seat in Washington D.C. and a new Inter-American Court of Human Rights has its seat in San Jose, Costa Rica. The Commission and the Court are also entrusted with the function of enforcement and are in the course of developing their own human rights jurisprudence.

There is no dearth of literature on human rights, and there is some on human rights law. But there was a long felt need for a book on the International Law of Human Rights, a book which within the confines of a single volume told us what the international human rights law is. Sieghart's book which is intended 'as a book of law, not of morality, philosophy or politics' admirably fulfills this need. It enlightens us about the 'substantive content of this new corpus of law.'

The range of the work is tremendous. It deals with the historical background, the formal structure and the enforcement procedures of the principal international instruments, namely, the UN Charter; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the European Convention on Human Rights; the European Social Charter; the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man; the American Convention on Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

Several far reaching Conventions of ILO and UNESCO are also dealt with and there is a useful commentary on the Helsinki Final Act.

One of the useful features of the book is the list which it has of the countries that have become parties to the various instruments up to the beginning of 1982 and the actual text of reservations made by these countries whilst acceding to these instruments. A suggestion: notices of derogation and objection to reservations, which have been omitted to save space, furnish valuable material and should find a place.

According to Sieghart, the primary purpose of his book is 'that a Ruritanian lawyer, faced with a point of human rights law to which he does not know the answer, and endowed with no more than a working knowledge of the English language, should be able to use it to find the human right concerned, see whether any of the instruments of international human rights law recognizes and protects it, to what extent and subject to what restrictions, check whether Ruritania is a party to that instrument and

Communication

IT is obvious that the dilemmas facing our society are well-known and have been with us for quite some time; for the simple reason that to achieve the status of a dilemma social issues must persist in time and import. A quick run through our classic dilemmas reveals that what were once seen as potentially synthesizable issues have been regressing into either-or polarisations. While it was once believed that poverty and affluence could both be reduced by *inter se* adjustments, it is now observed that abolition of poverty is quite independent of creation of wealth; while it was once hoped that our tribal and ethnic identities will have a fruitful collaboration with our secular and cosmopolitan notions, it is now seen that our tribalism and

ethnicity are being fattened on cannibalising our newer secular identities; while it was expected that our ancient feudal political habits would be slowly transformed into norms of our adopted democratic constitution, it is evident that this has not happened; while it was felt that our spiritual heritage would be freed from the stranglehold of religious sophistry and ritualism by the cleansing influence of a scientific temper, what we have been actually seeing is the proliferation of religious proselytising and rituals at the expense of both spiritual and scientific consciousness; and so on.

Of course there have been, and will be, interesting and even valuable scholarly debates on some hidden

historical determinism underlying these changes as opposed to 'blind' agglomeration of specific micro-level events. The truth, as far as can be known, might well be composed of elements of both. But there is available, as always, another less rigorous but no less revealing manner for understanding our social behaviour, by examination of popular instinct which is surprisingly uniform across the usual social divisions of class, community and, even, race. What does this popular instinct reveal?

Beginning at the top, while there is some confusion about the omniscience and omnipotence of the universal God, there is a strengthening belief in the worth of functional gods controlling wealth, health and security. Next, while there is despair and cynicism about the practicability of justice and virtue, there is an increasing reliance on the capricious interpretation of law at local and personal levels. Further down, while there is a feeling that the forms of modern political institutions should be maintained as talismans of modernity and for the appeasement of our conscience, the real political business needs to be conducted on the older and familiar plane of caste and tribal relationships. And at the lowest and most private level, while it is recognised that there are no real social or human bonds between people, some kind of 'order' needs to be maintained for ease and relative inexpensiveness of private manoeuvre. It is easy to see the parallelism between these feelings and the more articulate categories of scholarly analysis. But there is a deeper level of popular instinct, still, which is frequently absent in scholarly deliberations.

At this level there is a new and growing notion that the world is neither known nor knowable. Of course, this is a global trend, and is having a different impact on regions with different backlogs of unresolved conflicts. But in our country, and perhaps in most of the 'third world', it is changing the configuration of our traditional dilemmas, some of which have been mentioned above. Some of the important corollaries are: things are neither managed nor manageable, things are neither valued nor valuable and remedies are neither available nor possible. The most damaging consequence of this deep conceptual sterility is the widespread psychological insecurity which, in turn, is subverting all social consciousness by reducing it to narrow individual appetites and fears. In one sense what is transpiring is the final destruction of the achievements of European Renaissance — the power and validity of human effort. And in our country which did not experience such renaissance, the consequence is a retreat to a more directionless medievalism which pushes the dilemmas into crises

■4
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whether it has made any relevant reservations or derogations — or, if it is not a party, whether it can be said to be bound by any relevant customary international law and so conclude whether he can take the point either in his own courts or before one of the new international institutions. With any luck, he may also find some help on how to frame and argue the point, perhaps from other cases which have already been decided somewhere.'

This purpose is fully attained in Part III of the book which succinctly culls out the principles laid down in the judgments of international bodies, particularly the European Commission and the European Court, and the national courts which have developed their own domestic human rights jurisprudence, and digests them under the text of the appropriate article dealing with a specific human right. This has the great advantage of providing a useful insight into the perceptions and values of different courts manned by different judges hailing from different backgrounds and cultures.

Adequate notice is taken of the decisions of the US Supreme Court, courts in the United Kingdom, including the Privy Council, and the judgments of the national courts of European countries, as also of several Commonwealth countries such as Canada, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Guinea, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, New Zealand, Sierra Leone, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, the West Indian Associated States, Zambia.

No less than 73 decisions of the Supreme Court of India are mentioned. The leading cases from Romesh Thapar to Maneka Gandhi are all there, appropriately referred to and properly summed up.

The Supreme Court decision in the case of Kharak Singh vs. State of Uttar Pradesh is examined under the heading 'Physical Integrity' with reference to the topic 'freedom of movement within a State'. The question before the Supreme Court was whether the placing of a person under surveillance, which inter alia entailed secret picketing of his house or approaches to his house and domiciliary visits at night, restricted his right 'to move freely throughout the territory of India.'

After referring to the majority view, which placed a restrictive interpretation in holding that the freedom guaranteed had reference to something tangible and feasible and not to the imponderable effect on the mind of a person, Sieghart sets out the minority view and the classic observations of Justice Subba Rao. 'How could a movement under the scrutinising gaze of the policeman be described as a free movement? The whole country is his jail.'

Subsequent judgments of the Supreme Court are noticed and Sieghart rightly concludes that the minority view is probably now regarded as a correct statement of the Indian law. This is just one instance of the thoroughness and scholarship which are pervasive characteristics of this book.

The book will be of immense value to lawyers involved in human rights issues as also to judges who are called upon to interpret and enforce the human rights provisions in their national constitutions. It will also be of great assistance both to students of international law of human rights and other persons and organisations concerned with international human rights jurisprudence. One hopes that a paper back edition will be forthcoming at a price which is less forbidding and which will make the book more readily available to the average Indian practitioner and human rights activists.

The real merit of the book is its clarity. It is not a pedantic disquisition by a pompous philosopher. It is an absorbing factual tale by a man who has profound faith in the promotion and protection of human rights of individuals everywhere through independent national courts and international tribunals. Sieghart assures us that he has refrained from expressing any views of his own and 'resisted many temptations to discuss rather than describe the subject matter.' Let us hope that following the advice of Oscar Wilde, Sieghart fully yields to this temptation in the next edition and reveals his thinking, his philosophy, his values.

To the taunt of the cynic that the only thing universal about human rights is their universal violation, Sieghart gives an effective answer: 'It would of course be naive to expect that international human rights law will miraculously abolish the oppression and exploitation of man by his fellows. But by making at least some of these visibly illegitimate, it can help to diminish their intensity and their extent, and so justify a position of guarded optimism about its prospective utility.'

The most heartening reward for Sieghart would be if the book by the diffusion of knowledge and the vistas it has opened serves to provide some redress to the countless victims of human rights' violation to whom he has humbly dedicated his work.

Soli J. Sorabjee

LAND DEGRADATION: INDIA'S SILENT CRISIS

by Mukarram Bhagat. Centre for Education and Documentation, Bombay.

ON June 5 this year, a group of 'Chipko' activists led by Sunderlal Bahuguna ended a 250 km long *padayatra* at Barkot in Uttarkashi district of U.P. and reported that a mad rush was on in the hills to raise apple orchards. This was bound to eat into the traditional oak forests which yield fodder, leafy manure and fuel within easy reach of the local people. Besides, oak is an excellent soil binder and holds water. Apples, on the other hand, meant for the urban rich, would actually require wood for packaging, hence more trees to be hacked.

The same day, Jayanta Bandopadhyaya of the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, came

along with a report which said that limestone quarrying which was fast growing in the Doon valley and Mussoorie hills had led to acute water shortage in the valley and was destroying agricultural lands. Already, poor rice yields were being registered.

Meanwhile, in the capital, Deputy Minister for Environment Digvijay Singh, Secretary T.N. Khoshoor and Planning Commission member M.G.R. Menon took the floor at various seminars and symposia during the 'Environment Week' leading up to June 5 to tell the public that the government and the bureaucracy were not unaware of the dangerous state of the environment throughout the country. Prof. Menon in fact came armed with scores of slides to FICCI auditorium illustrating the damage deforestation had wrought, slides such as those comparing crystal clear waters of a bygone era in Himalayan rivers and the brown sludge that is slithering downwards today.

All of them were talking about degradation of land, the subject matter of Mukarram Bhagat's mimeographed report published in December last. With nearly 50 tables, that is on an average almost one table for every other page, he illustrates the damage to food production from ecological degradation, desertification, deforestation and the damage from drought and floods. Quoting liberally from a number of studies and observations of researchers, government officials and concerned individuals, he tries to show that the 'real' environment crisis facing the country is not only chemical waste dumps, pesticide poisoning, uprooting of trees or radioactive hazards of atomic plants. 'By far the most serious environmental crisis facing poor countries like India is the wholesale degradation of their productive land resources on which most of their people depend directly for their basic sustenance', he says.

How does land get degraded? There are two processes. First is the erosion of topsoil, a few inches in depth, on which all plant and animal life ultimately depends for sustenance and survival. Erosion takes place when plant cover is removed and the soil is exposed to wind and water flows. Secondly, land can also get degraded by the depletion in the fertility of the soil.

The erosion process is by now fairly well understood, thanks to 'Chipko' and many other individual observations. Bhagat's report documents this process in detail and covers wide ground in explaining the depletion process, the best example of which is the experience of farmers in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh who discovered that after the Tawa Dam was built, some 1,200 hectares were acutely hit by waterlogging. The cost of reclaiming every waterlogged hectare in the country ranges from Rs 8,750 to Rs 25,000.

The farmers started a 'Mitti Bachao Andolan' (Save the Soil Movement) and Bhagat notes, 'If

these "andolans" become widespread, with farmers all over the country making organised demands for compensation for the damage done to their lands by irrigation, the economic and political consequences can be well imagined. And such a possibility can no longer be ruled out, considering the several agrarian movements of angry farmers the country has already seen.'

If one is to mention the author's prescriptions for overcoming the crisis, one would be citing the entire report. However to mention two of the far-reaching remedies he suggests: Lack of a proper delivery system in the bulk of our irrigation projects is the major cause of low cropping intensity prevalent in the canal irrigated areas of the country. Experiments conducted under the water management programme indicate that with proper field channel and drainage systems the areas irrigated and cultivated with different crops can be increased upto 25%. Secondly, he says, crop cultivation in areas with rainfall of 300 mm or less must be gradually stopped and replaced with forestry and animal husbandry. He is thus talking of a rational land use planning.

The report is a factual account of the degradation that has taken place and the prescriptions are also of a technical nature and there is no scope in it for the discussion of socio-political reasons for the degradation and, needless to say, no discussion of solutions based on political action.

N.J.

WORK, UNION AND COMMUNITY: Industrial Man in South India by Uma Ramaswamy. Oxford University Press, 1983.

THE multiple facets of the life of an industrial worker have rarely been studied as a composite whole in the Indian context. The tendency has been to study a single dimension of a worker's activities, preferably his interaction with unions or his place in the work organisation. Uma Ramaswamy makes a major contribution to industrial sociology in this country as she follows the textile worker of Coimbatore from the shop-floor to the union and into the home. Through interviews, participant observation and as a tenant of a worker, the author has brought together a wealth of data, remarkable for its depth and perceptivity.

The focal concern of *Union, Work and Community* is with the nature, character and aspirations of the industrial worker as industrial man. With nearly eight decades of industrialisation behind him and with a union movement nearly as old, how has the fact of industrial employment shaped the attitudes, behaviour and life styles of the industrial worker of Coimbatore? Dr. Ramaswamy seeks to answer this question by probing at depth the manner in which the workers earn a living inside and outside the factory, their attitudes to work, their relationship with

their unions, their interface with the community they live in and the social mobility they are able to realise for themselves and their children.

What are the characteristics of this industrial man as perceptible in the workers of Coimbatore? Economically they are marked by the 'propensity for conspicuous consumption to the neglect of basic necessities.' The author finds that such an expenditure pattern is not common to all the workers. She identifies differences in expenditure patterns which are, interestingly, related to where the worker resides. Workers who live in outlying villages and commute to work, invest their surplus income in their small land holdings and are rarely purchasers of commodities from the mill cooperative stores, a common practice with other workers. The village based worker does not spend excessively on dress and entertainment. The worker residing in suburban areas is better housed and saves to own a house. Being in the suburbs he has a variety of opportunities for earning additional income through small business or trade. Proximity to the city and the middle-class however tend to make him spend much more than the rural based worker.

In marked contrast is the city based worker. He lives in slums. He has little or no opportunity for earning additional income as space is expensive, nor does he have much investible surplus. Typically he is a big spender, living beyond his means, entertainment and dress being major items of expenditure.

At the work place the worker finds little intrinsic reward in work and hence his attitudes to work are shaped by what economic rewards he can take home. An industrial work culture where a worker forfeits his seniority if he seeks transfer to another department, can hardly engender any notions of intrinsic reward. Yet, workers are sensitive to the deprivations and inequities on the shop-floor and resist fiercely any attempt to undo what they have won through collective action. The unions have therefore been and continue to be of pivotal importance in the lives of the textile workers.

It is not as if the unions have won on all fronts in defence of working class rights and interests. Over the decades the number of women employed has steadily fallen. Technological changes in the industry have been used to phase women out. This, despite the acknowledgement that the productivity of a woman worker is higher than that of a male worker. Traditional notions of a woman's place apart, a major factor has been the reluctance of employers to employ women as they have to pay full wages during maternity leave. Another major union failure has been the inability to secure for temporary and badli workers better wages and work security. Large sections of the workforce remain temporary or badli for a major part of their working lives. The gains of unionisation remain restricted to the permanent male worker. Temporary, badli and women workers remain peripheral recipients of the benefits of unionism.

But, despite this workers have remained steady union members, prepared to make individual sacrifice to defend collective rights and interests. There is discontent with leadership and the willingness to take collective action against leaders who fail to represent worker interests. In some cases workers have walked out en-bloc to form a new union. Unionism then is vibrant and alive, and industrial man committed to it, not merely for instrumental ends but because it brings him into fellowship with fellow workers.

Finally, the values nurtured in the work-place have eroded the traditional values of a caste ridden community. The barriers of commensality have largely broken down. Harijans however still continue to feel the detrimental effects of caste in recruitment and career opportunities, but on the other hand, Harijan union leaders have emerged. While 'manrams' — youth clubs organised by unions, contribute to an increasing political awareness across caste, it has remained a dominant factor for marriage and residential location.

Given these emergent characteristics, what are the social aspirations of the workers — to become a part of the middle-class or to set themselves apart as a distinct working class. The author comes out loud and clear. 'The Coimbatore workers are not a proletariat and do not wish to be one. The notion of being a subjugated, dispossessed proletariat does not appeal to them... This does not mean that the workers are not conscious of a shared identity. They are, and they have specific expectations as workers. What they want is an assurance of continuous employment under conditions which they consider just. These conditions include a place of work which is not demanding, supervision which does not breathe down their necks, good wages and bonus, and above all, respectability in spite of their being subordinate wage labourers.' Their models of emulation remain the proprietor and the self-employed man, freed from the dehumanising nature of wage labour. And yet despite these dreams, they find themselves forced by the constraints of the immediate environment, to pursue the same jobs for their children, thus gifting themselves the self-perpetuating identity of wage labour.

Where does this contradiction leave them? Would they chose to change their models of emulation? Would they be forced to take a stand and name the world? Or would they continue to trade with the system in gradual measure for mutually acceptable compromises which would not shape them into a proletariat? The questions are intriguing. The author is silent here but the data seem to point in the direction of a gathering storm. If what has happened in Bombay is any indication, the industrial workers though fascinated by the comforts of the 'terry-cot' society, are also prepared to assert themselves as a proletariat.

DEVELOPMENT BUREAUCRACY by Pai Panandiker, Bishnoi and Sharma. Oxford University Press, 1983.

FOR a book that originates from the reputed Centre for Policy Research and is authored by established authorities led by a person who is both an academician and a bureaucrat in his own way, Dr. V.A. Pai Panandiker, the work certainly lives up to the reputation of its authors. Its objective is simple. It seeks to analyse the efficacy of bureaucracy as a tool in the process of economic development. In its seven chapters it seeks to examine, at a cross section level, the role of administrators (or bureaucracy) in the economic development of two districts, i.e., Karnal in Haryana and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. The analysis is based on the primary work that has gone behind the study and it is to be noted that while the sampling techniques are scientific, the process of 'question and answer' does leave the results open to some respondent bias and this needs to be viewed with an open mind.

Students of public administration will note that Indian bureaucracy has undergone a motivational change. From a set of people whose main aim was to maintain the *status quo* in the socio-economic fabric of the Indian economy in accordance with the wishes of their British rulers, the administrator today has become more and more directed towards a development philosophy — the ethos of which has produced (or seeks to produce?) a set of people directly motivating change. The study thus seeks to examine how good this tool is in its stupendous task of motivating change in the socio-economic fabric of agriculture in the two districts.

Their findings suggest that the bureaucracy does have a significant share in the process of development and their comparison suggests that it is the weakness in the administrative structure that has caused Gorakhpur to acquire a secondary position to Karnal.

For practically one of the first primary studies in this area, the limitations are obvious but these should not belie the importance of the work. However, one major gap does exist and that is the neglect of the role of commercial banks and their officials (especially after 1963) in their analysis. Nevertheless, it is an extremely useful and informative piece of work.

Ajit Prasad

CONTRADICTION AND CHANGE: Emerging Patterns of Authority in a Rajasthan Village
by Anand Chakravarti. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1975.

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THE main concern of Anand Chakravarti, a Reader in Sociology at the University of Delhi, is to analyse

how political relations in a Rajput-dominated multi-caste village in Jaipur district have been 'affected by various measures' initiated in the wider political society' since the 1950s. Based on field work conducted in the mid-1960s, the monograph generates a wealth of data on the articulation of power and authority in Devisar village under the new dispensation of land reforms, adult franchise and democratic decentralization (*panchayati raj*).

In concentrating on the distribution and articulation of power, the author makes a conscious break with the caste-bound framework of much of the anthropological writings on rural India. Relations between leaders and followers, as between landlords and tenants, may cut across the hierarchy of caste, and therefore a study of politics at the village level would be the poorer if riveted to the well-worn grooves of dominant and subordinate castes, (pp. 1-2). The focus, instead, is on individual and interpersonal relations, many of which obviously cut across the boundaries of caste.

The conceptual framework of the study is built around Weber's well-known discussion of power, legitimacy and authority, though Chakravarti rightly argues that a clear-cut distinction between 'power in general' and 'authority' (power which is legitimate) remains ambiguous in Devisar despite the waning of traditional authority. Significantly, Chakravarti does away with that cherished implement of the anthropologists — the 'ethnographic present' — and instead digs into the *patwari* records, the Panchayat's minutes book and, of course, the memories of his informants to present a connected narrative over a forty-year time span.

Two general comments may be made on this detailed study of power relations in a Rajasthan village. First, despite the claim that he is using 'power' in a wide sense, Chakravarti's discussion is located within the twin poles of interpersonal relations and institutional politics. The cases cited by him are mostly about the authority of the Panchayat and the defence of or challenge to 'social disabilities' suffered by the non-Rajputs. He rightly remarks that the relationship between the *bhomia* landlords and the Balai Ahir and Jat tenants was not just an economic relationship, but a political one of rulers and subjects as well. But the discussion of tenancy and rents is altogether too brief; in fact, these do not figure in an otherwise comprehensive index.

The second general comment is about the way Chakravarti has handled his 'cases' (thirty-nine in number). In the introduction the author disarmingly states that the analysis of inter-personal relations through detailed cases may 'lack the elegance of works which deal mainly with the relations between enduring groups and categories'. I must confess that going through the book one gets at times a bit overwhelmed by the details. Perhaps the author could

have analysed his case material as narratives in a more formal manner.

In one sense these cases are 'master narratives' constructed by Chakravarti from different sources, with an accompanying motif penned by the author himself. Thus we have the case of 'the harassed Meena', the 'errant bridegroom', the 'persistent Ahir', the 'negotiating Balai', the 'Rajput patron' etc. While Chakravarti's presentation of his case material is exemplary, it does not readily allow us to analyse the ways in which the two interested parties and those outside a particular conflict look upon these historical narratives. Nor does the presentation enable us to figure out the intersections of the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic ('functions' and 'indices' to borrow the terminology of Barthes) through which meanings are generated in these narratives. An analysis along these lines could perhaps yield some interesting insights into the differing perceptions of power and authority in the village.

But then it is perhaps unfair to criticise Chakravarti in terms of analyses which have come out subsequent to the publication of his book. There is however one mistake which should be rectified in the next edition of the book. On p. 26, *Ain-i-Akbari* (The Laws/Institutes of Akbar) is mistakenly referred to as the biography of that Mughal emperor.

Shahid Amin

EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY: Theory and Practice, edited by Andre Beteille. Oxford University Press, 1983.

THE study of inequality in terms of its social, legal, political and economic aspects is the subject of this edited volume based on research sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research. It is now well recognised that equality is at least as complex in its implications as inequality and the relevance of this becomes clear in the Indian context where a constitutionally guaranteed equality remains largely on paper. While Beteille insists that the specialists who have written on this subject want to reach a large audience interested in a serious examination from a variety of angles, he acknowledges that there are bound to be communication gaps in any such attempt. Indeed, this volume is welcome mainly because for far too long has socially relevant debate between the scholar and the public remained apart. This perhaps is because of the acknowledged gap between the language of popular argument and the language of scholarly discourse.

Unfortunately, despite conscious attempts to ensure that the discussions on equality are kept at understandable levels, the essays themselves reveal that the scholars have, ever so often, succumbed to the temptation of lapsing into vocabulary that is exclusively their own.

Notwithstanding these constraints, the essays themselves cover a wide range of subjects. Suresh Tendulkar deals with economic inequality in the Indian perspective. He sees the Indian development experience as being divided into two distinct phases: the first where sustained growth took place and the second since the mid-sixties where deceleration was the rule.

Manoranjan Mohanty looks at the political theory of equality and shows that the Indian concept leaves several unresolved issues like how to reconcile the demand for substantive political equality with pervasive socio-economic inequalities.

Malvika Karlekar who writes on the educational field, points out that inequality stems from factors ranging from the knowledge of English in the early educational stage to the continuing dominance of public school products in certain aspects of life. Disparity between the sexes, and economic inequality were clearly determining factors in the quality of the education that was accessible.

Sivaramayya argues that the concepts of equality which are enshrined in the Indian Constitution involve collocation of three major principles of equality, viz., the numerical, the meritarian and the proportional. He points out that the fundamental weakness in the system is that laws are primarily effective only against State actions. Further, since the fundamental rights are essentially negative, there is the implication that the citizen has no claim on government. This vitiates positive efforts on the part of government to enforce the concepts of equality as constitutionally defined. On the issue of equality for women it is noted that inequality before the law exists not only against women themselves but also varies depending on their religion. This is an aspect that Sivaramayya discusses in detail thus providing a vital link between a commentary on the law and an alive social issue.

Anand Chakravarti who has dealt with inequality in the realm of rural life, points out that contrary to the western image, it is not only caste but also more common factors like the distribution of property and power that ensure inequality in the villages. Because of the sociologists preoccupation with caste, Chakravarti describes the various means by which caste factors result in inequality in great detail. However, the more interesting parts of this analysis deal with the evidence of an economic basis for these divisions both in terms of size and land holdings and the political power structures that have emerged as significant factors in modern Indian rural life.

Such inter-disciplinary work on subjects of enormous national relevance is essential for any deeper understanding of our situation. Social science research scores when it gets unified both in its areas of interest and in its activity to communicate effectively within its own various divisions.

M. Sengupta

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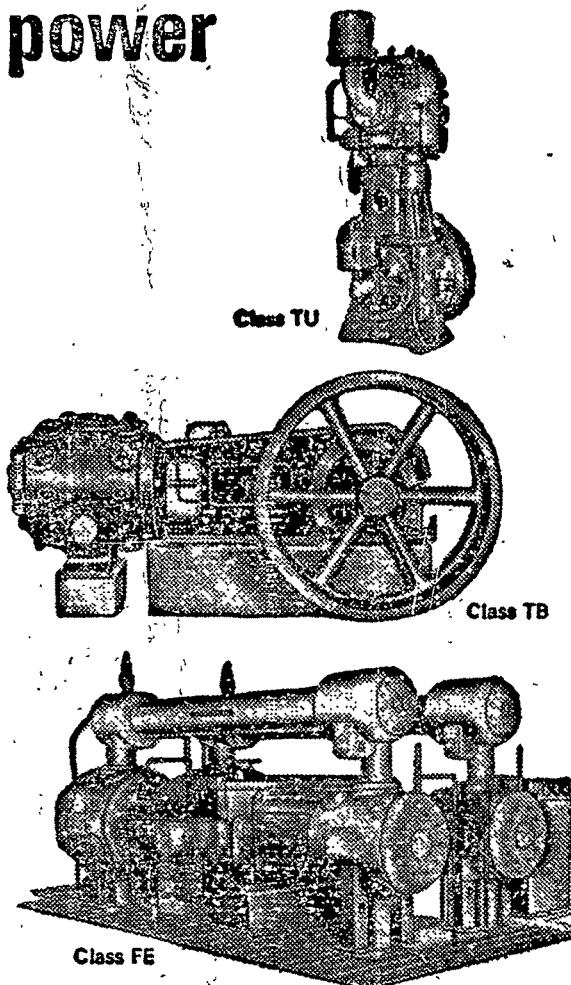
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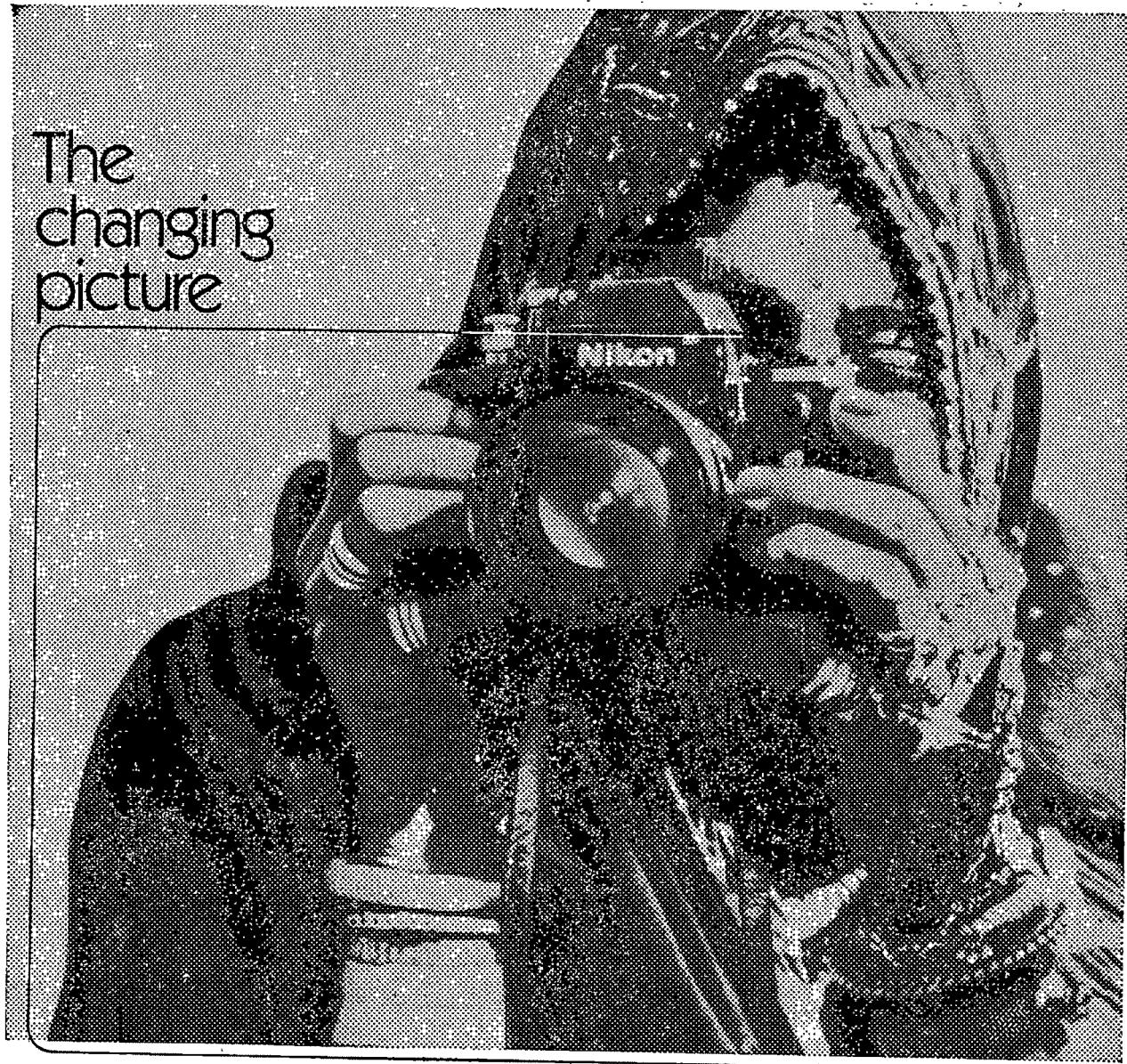
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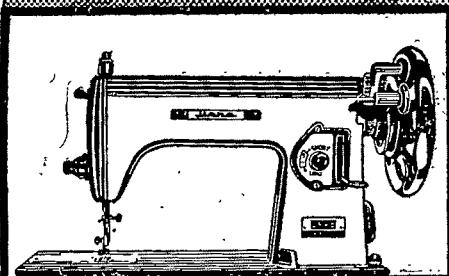
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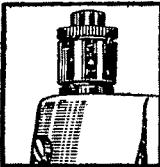
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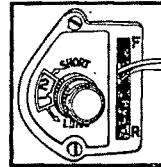
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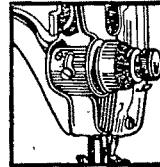
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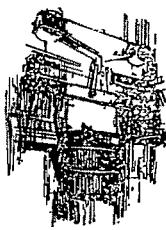
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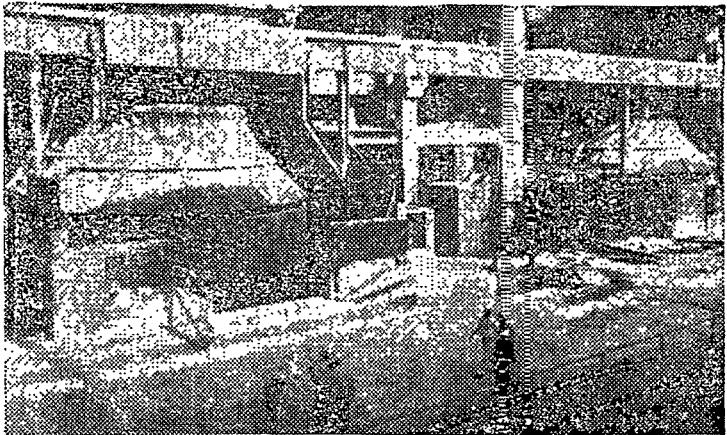
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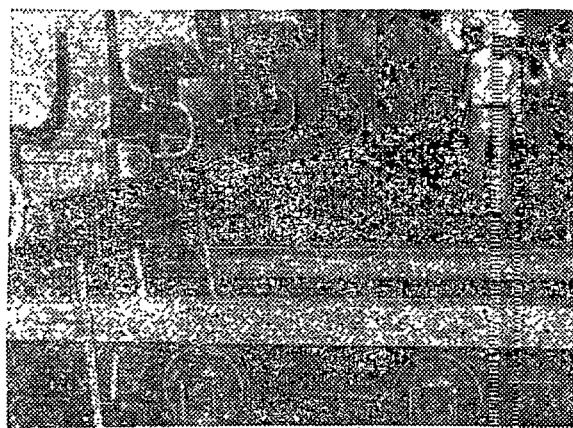


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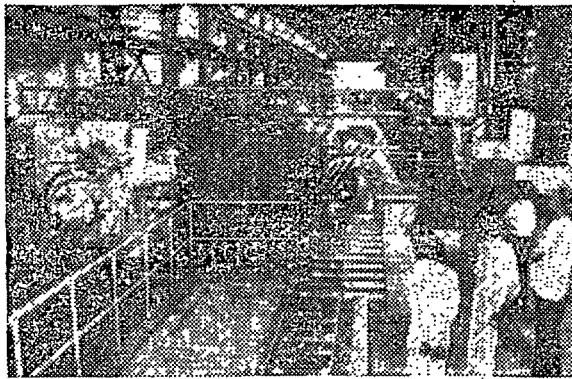
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A short statement of
the issues involved

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Dilip Bobb, senior writer with
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Amrita Abraham, journalist

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COVER
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The problem

MUCH thought and fury has been expended on the state of the electronic media in developing countries. Our particular experience shows an upward swing in quantitative terms, the output has increased enormously, but there is a sliding down in quality, from content to technique, whichever way you look at it. Everyone mutters a great deal about information and education — but neither gets translated into any kind of credibility. No one seems to know what to do with these technological toys.

The suffocation that government monopoly over radio, television and the short film imposes is another story altogether. The market is captive, mind-boggling in size, and there is no fear of any kind of competition from any direction. Only changes in the political atmosphere are reflected, moving from cautious experimentation in periods of stability to saturation propaganda in periods of uncertainty. To hold on to his job, therefore, the producer has to keep his proverbial finger on the pulse of his political masters. Or is it the other way around with the politician in power forcing the pace, breathing heavily down numerous, unfortunate necks?

Yet, when one looks at the technical deterioration (it always is a shock to see a newsreel today, you can barely make out what's happening on the screen. Or listen to music over the radio where the sound of the scratching needle overpowers all other sounds, or...) in an age soaring with technological leaps, one is painfully aware of where the absence of competition can lead to. Why have no procedures been established to check lapses? Where are the technical vigilante teams?

And what about talent — or has that become a dirty word? Why has nothing been evolved to locate it? Isn't it possible to review the year's work of young producers and, on that basis, farm out work for the following year? After all, creativity is not static, nor can it be congealed in this or that person. Why also is no notice taken of experiments like SITE, for instance, which has shown that, intelligently based, TV can serve as an aid in the hands of the people at the base, an instrument to be used by them in so many different ways. But for all this to happen, there has to be concern at the quality of what we see on TV or hear over the radio. Where is this concern hiding itself?

One also wonders whether any startling changes would occur if the media were brought under autonomous control. The scenarios might just repeat them-

selves unless areas of competition were created. Structures would need complete overhauling if all the hidden (hopefully!) initiative was to be released. What shape and form should the structures take? How can the media reflect the creativity of our people, how can it dispense with information which is not propaganda, how can it call for talent, how can it be made responsive to technical excellence? All of this needs a little thought before people begin to think that the commercial movie is all that electronic media is supposed to provide since Doordarshan can never find anything else to fill its extra time with: the craze for video amongst the affluent is a warning signal.

But the craze for video is not confined to the affluent: for one, it has entered the *dhabas* along the highways where porn, soft and hard, is shown to weary truck drivers. In fact, an entire new generation may begin to associate porn with the technological revolution. Who knows? Many in the West think that porn is preferable to violence. Perhaps it is, but let us not forget the close link between the two.

In all of this yearning for moving pictures, can we allow the radio to be so neglected? Is it to acquire the status of the poor relation although its reach extends to far wider audiences? Where are the audio centres where the young, or the old, can be encouraged to take a tape recorder and get lost amongst the diverse cultures of this sub-continent, recording and beaming the excitement of exchanges from region to region, and not in the stilted language currently used. Wasn't the electronic media supposed to catch the voices of the normally silent, forgotten masses? Wasn't the vast quantum of funds expended on colour TV and video supposed to fulfil a function apart from the rather dubious one of being a purveyor of lumpen entertainment? The glee with which TV expansion plans are announced, plans of taking this so-called entertainment to more and more villages, to project the bizarre visions of the lumpen life, might succeed in creating fantasies which can only help to frustrate our people forever. Let us sit up and take note of some of these questions before we reach the point of no return. Of course, we might all be quite wrong in our assumptions. The present state of the media might be a precise and conscious reflection of governmental thinking — perhaps that's what all political leaderships want, to dull the sensitivities of highly creative peoples.

Highlands and lowlands

I Q B A L M A L I K

THE Prime Minister of India mounts the ramparts of Red Fort on Independence Day and declares that India shall have 70% television coverage soon. The time-frame for the bonanza to the people of India is 1984-end by which time she has to prepare for another general election. She does not mention why such coverage is a material point since INSAT-1B would have provided total illumination of the country much much earlier—by mid-October this year. To do that would be to get into problems of direct reception of the satellite signal on sets costing Rs. 30,000 a piece. The bait now for the people of India is the conventional colour TV set being promised at Rs. 5,000.

The television boom is on, even though in a lop-sided manner, with the active participation and encouragement of the Government of India, which oversees the electronic media process from licensing the manufacture of TV receivers to the last picture frame transmitted to TV homes. Extension of transmission from morning till midnight is also promised. So, an event no less important than the Pokharan implosion is on the way, entitling India to membership of the Developed TV Club of the world, at least so far as hours of transmission are concerned. It does not matter if the present two million TV sets may or may not increase by another two million by 1984-end for a 700

million population. What is important is the proliferation of a central message as message.

The farsightedness of our political masters has to be perceived to be believed. The electronic madness that is being suddenly inflicted is not without design even though the design may not be consistent with democratic processes, such as a formal statement of government's purpose and intentions, a debate on it within Parliament or outside to ascertain representative public opinion. The assumption is that the government knows the people's interest best in broadcasting as it does in the case of civil supplies. No measurement of audience needs or preferences is required and a process like Nielsen's ratings is a fiction invented by the wicked West. The government says the people want more and more of television as it is.

In September 1982, the garrulous advocate of colour television, V.P. Sathe, was removed when on the verge of converting his dream into reality by importing 20 low-power TV transmitters. Mr. Salve marches in. During the budget session for 1983-84 he has no proposal or provision for the Rs. 68 crore TV transmitters. Suddenly, in March 1983 Bhagat takes over and in April he announces the Rs. 68 crore plan which must have taken months to prepare, even before he took over, but to execute which Salve was not the man. Bhagat is.

In western countries, says the Prime Minister, ministers barely last eleven months; so, true to the western democratic traditions, Information and Broadcasting ministers must change quickly, particularly as they man a most sensitive area of public life and head, in Orwell's terms, the Ministry of Truth. They persuade, they cajole, they tell us if God is supreme above, the Congress (I), the PM, her son are the truth, fairness and compassion below. Bhagat retains the excellent points of Salve's stewardship, such as Essential Services Maintenance Act for broadcasting as it is too dangerous to be left to professionals as also that broadcasting is not for the people but for the privilege and

pleasure of the government. To quote him, 'the 68 crore plan is through the *kripa* (kindness) of the Prime Minister.'

Says the Prime Minister in defence of her statement on the anti-Zia riots in Pakistan, that injustice anywhere should be condemned. That is the kind of statement that her father made in condemning Hitler and Mussolini. That is the kind of statement that she herself made when she was young and one saw in her the reflection of her father's idealism and was moved by it. But, when she makes such a statement now, it does not move one because one has come to realize the great chasm between her words and actions.

In Pakistan, there is the cruellest possible suppression of freedom of information and expression. It is not merely the case of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Begum Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto (caricatured by Salman Rushdie as Iron Pants in his *Shame*, because he himself has cut loose from his links and lives in London); it is essentially a question of being able to congregate, to converse, to argue, to write, to say things freely without a Big Brother or Sister watching. In the case of broadcasting, human rights are as much denied by India as by Pakistan.

The freedom of the press is allowed by the Government of India, but only as a necessary evil. The only reason for which the press enjoys this freedom and can boast of it is due to the odour of the Emergency. The Emergency got the government a very bad press abroad, despite the Herculean efforts of her aides to represent it as a ray of hope in the otherwise murky Indian scene. The *Guardian*, the *Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Christian Monitor*, *Time*, *News week*, etc., are important for the image of 1, Safdarjung Road. The BBC representative is not that important; he can always be asked to leave. Pakistan once declared him *persona non grata*, so did our government during the Emergency, thereby equalising the values of democracy and dictatorship. Things of the past, but not of such a remote past that they cannot recur. For these reasons, and no other, the

press in India is free, though even that is a debatable proposition. The AINEC may for ever be supportive of the Establishment and counter the independence of the Editors' Guild of India. Journalistic truth and with that the freedom of expression can become relative, and it requires a discerning reader (there are not many) to sift truth from untruth.

Thus, the press too in India is a divided camp — the positivists as genuine friends of the government and the so-called critical realists considered adversaries. To save the people of India from the latter category, says the Prime Minister, government cannot relinquish control over radio and television. No one would question the government having its own exclusive channel of broadcasting to tell its own version of truth, provided another channel is allowed to others who may equally be interested in truth. But, that is not permitted, competition in broadcasting is banned, diversity of opinion as the foundation of democracy is considered a destabilising factor by the government. Yet, it has been said that with 70% television we shall have an 'information society'.

Says I.K. Gujral, a former I & B Minister in the August 15 issue of *Yojana*: 'In our system the media minister is a very junior partner of the establishment. The policy making high-ups in Yojana Bhavan and in South Block do not assign any importance to this "song and drama" outfit. The Information Ministry is likened to an advertising agency which is summoned to provide marketing support to a Lux soap or Lakme Lipstick. The role of the I and B Ministry is merely to provide cosmetic effects to policies made somewhere else.'

There in a nutshell is the personal experience of a former Congress (I) I and B minister who has had the courage to define the real role of the I and B ministry, pointing directly to the fact that not a leaf in Akashvani Bhavan can move without the will of the Prime Minister. That really is the central truth. Yojana Bhavan idealism and their

academic dissertations on a total systems approach can also be reined in as and when politically expedient — witness their meek consent to release Rs. 68 crores for a package of TV transmitters without any additional TV programme production or reception provision. The normally high-sounding philosophies of the Planning Commission therefore can be bent to serve the next General Election drama's Act One by 1984-end.

To be fair, it is not that there is no one within the Planning Commission with insight of the consequences of the kind of centralisation of broadcasting that the Government of India is hell-bent to enforce. Professor Yash Pal, Chief Consultant to the Planning Commission in the field of media applications, has spoken in public in his personal capacity and drawn attention to the positive as well as the negative use of powerful electronic technologies.

It is his argument that the obvious use of such technologies is for concentration of power than otherwise, unless there is a conscious effort to augment them with other subsidiary technological elements, sound goals and regulating practices. If this is not done the danger is that the free flow of information will be only from the highlands to the lowlands, whereas the capability to acquire, process and disseminate information can be used for illuminating relationships, fostering integration and not for domination and centralisation. Professor Yash Pal is a very distinguished scientist and communicator and his advice should carry weight with the government as well as the public. But does it?

By now the government is very much conscious of the importance of its monopoly over television and radio and very much determined to hold on to it. Not to speak of autonomy, there is no talk now even of functional autonomy that we used to hear in Sathe's times. And, of course, there is no question of the government allowing any competitive broadcasting. That by doing so the government itself has become directly responsible for killing initiative and creativity which

should characterise any living broadcasting organisation does not seem to trouble it. The taste for this absolute centralisation of broadcasting originates from the Emergency days. And from those days dates the use of television as a political weapon, so much so that radio, covering 89% of the population and 79% of the area, and which may be described as the poor man's means of information and entertainment, is hardly ever mentioned. The Independence Day proclamation to provide television coverage to 70% of the population, mostly through low-power transmitters but with the relay of a central programme from Delhi, marks a new era in looking at television not in terms of quality, diversity, but sheer quantity; not as area-specific programming, but as opening so many new conduits to carry Delhi's message.

One must face it; the content of Delhi's message has become the Prime Minister herself and her son. They are the two ubiquitous sounds and images in radio and television news and views — in one case with the combination of the office of Prime Minister and Party President, in the other, with the office of a Party General Secretary and membership of Parliament providing legitimacy. Lessons have been learnt from the past charges of extra-constitutionalism and, seemingly, an air of propriety is being maintained.

Radio and television will not tell you why Jagannath Mishra had to give up the chief ministership of Bihar, even though he may have had a majority in the legislature. There can only be speculation on whether Rajiv Gandhi disapproved of him; on his part, Dr. Jagannath would continue to swear allegiance to him, reminiscent of retainers kicked out of court by emperors, but hoping to regain grace and forgiveness. On this democratic imperialism, radio and television do not have a word to say or a picture to show except that so and so is now in power or out of it. In other words, radio and television, and the retinue of commentators, summoned from time to time to lend an aura of respectability and objectivity in programming, never provide background

information to their audiences as to how political processes governing the daily lives of the people of India are functioning.

The government monopoly over broadcasting and the refusal to allow any competitive effort take their toll of quality of broadcast as well as morality of professionals who prepare the programmes. To quote I.K. Gujral again: 'In this environment, unfortunately the word "professionalism" has come to acquire a distorted meaning. They (the professionals) have their own problems with the die-hard bureaucracy but, with time, they too are now cogs of the same regime. The system does not permit, nor does it need, professional media culture. That is why it can entrust the media directorship to any administrator to further strengthen the Ministry's (of I and B) grip. Individual outlook and effort can provide a very limited relief, unless we undertake a complete overhaul of the system and its philosophy.'

But, instead of overhauling the structure of broadcasting, the central government is enlarging its existing base. For instance, it was announced that from September 1 employees engaged on contract will also be entitled to pension even after ten years of service — and that too without screening or any fitness test. The basic assumption applied to such staff that they are in broadcasting for the continued excellence of their artistic performance has thus been done away with. What has now become the primary consideration is the duration of service leading to entitlement for pension like any clerk. Since competitive broadcasting is not permitted, the government has, by providing this type of apparent security, ensured unquestioned loyalty and subservience expected of a government servant, as the very term government servant implies that government is the sole master.

In this case creativity, innovation and the exercise of imaginative faculties required in the conception and execution of broadcast programming are to take place wholly under government auspices. A lid has been put closing all the holes

through which a breath of fresh air might have crept in. It would now be well-nigh impossible for any future government to lift this lid. This development if you please has taken place at the recommendation of the G. Parthasarathi Committee, in session since November 1980, which includes besides many intellectuals, a former Director General, AIR, and a former Director General and Additional Director General, Doordarshan. Present and future generations of broadcasters should and would express gratitude to them for abolishing the distinction between a creative artist and a government servant, thus making the ruling party's status quo permanent.

And, here, the point recently made by Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy, a sitting judge of the Supreme Court, in his Bertrand Russell Memorial lecture, that the vast majority of Indian intellectuals were petty-bourgeois and as such reactionaries becomes valid. More than the ignorant masses, says Reddy, it is the so-called intellectuals who with their outward enlightened garb are responsible for obscurantism and revivalism and who instead of being detached are 'greedy position, possession and power grabbers', allowing the ruling bourgeoisie to make any use of them. Reddy cited the example of All India Radio beginning its transmission with 'suprabhatam' and Doordarshan Swami's yoga lessons as two government-owned media projecting 'the decadent revivalist philosophy of pseudo-intellectuals.'

The Doordarshan Swami used to claim, and still does, closeness to 1, Safdarjung Road, and remained entrenched in television for years as the sole teacher of Indian culture. Not that with his departure we have seen the end of revivalist support to our political masters. As recently as August 31, on Janamashtami, we had on television another Swami lecturing, which might be bearable to some, but intolerable when he started tracing his own holy ancestry. It was reminiscent of the other Swami (Brahmachari) who used to proclaim from Doordarshan that after a decade or so of Swamihood you are God and if gods support the

Establishment what more can one ask?

On a par with this was the example of an erstwhile Deputy Minister of Land B, who had the Moharram scene from his home town enacted on Doordarshan while he stood smiling on a balcony, proud of his achievement in the cause of national integration and secularism for which he was supposed to set policies for the whole country. 'Places of Pilgrimage' was a TV series going on recently in the name of ancient culture wherein you could see pilgrims washing themselves with polluted water or someone jumping into a huge cauldron of burning hot sweet rice to satisfy spiritual hunger.

After a quarter century of existence, Doordarshan does not yet know what software is. Therefore, there has to be a Software Committee, which was to give its report by September-end. But, while this Committee was in session the software was being revolutionised with the kind of programming mentioned; unlimited increase in Indian feature film content, imported film series, one of which, *Lucy*, is now part of Doordarshan's so-called daily national programme which runs for an atrociously long 1½ hours on a single channel. If there are protests against its cutting into regional programming, the Minister I and B says, ah, yes, we shall consult the chief ministers, as if they were executive producers of television. And, this is the kind of central, national programme which will go on the transmitters for 70% of the population.

The main point, however, to note is that the national programme has two fifteen minute news bulletins, one within an hour of the other, and they will carry, nationwide, as they do now, the image of the Prime Minister cum-Party President, and her General Secretary son who is now in daily demand for cutting the ribbon at government and non-government functions, or lecturing on super-power politics in the company of our distinguished intellectuals, administrators and politicians. Not to put too fine a point over it, there is an heir apparent, there is a surrogate, and AIR and Doordarshan do not have the slightest hesi-

tation in projecting him as such. Why should they, when everybody who is anybody is keen to be seen in his company on television?

There is no public check on the form and content of broadcasting. An ancient feature film with Dara Singh as Alexander and Prithviraj as Porus may be repeated a dozen times and the people accept it. There is no complaints committee with which to discuss either the aesthetics or misuse of broadcasting. Even if there is a programme advisory committee for radio or television, its members are the nominees of the central government, not the State government whose development plans such a committee is supposed to help publicise.

Even then, voices of dissent have started rising. There was a long debate in the Rajya Sabha on July 26 and in the Lok Sabha on July 28 on the cancellation of a radio recording by the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister. Members asked if it wasn't high time for the government to consider giving autonomous status to AIR and Doordarshan. The Minister I and B smugly replied, 'Autonomy is not necessary for the media to achieve their basic aims.' He was right. In fact, autonomy will militate against the present basic aims. The Committee for the Portrayal of Women in the Media and the Centre for Women's Development Studies circulated a paper on the projection of women as sex objects over Doordarshan, their main concerns being shown as health and beauty, clothes and flower arrangements — in other words, being just mindless coquettes. On August 22 the Opposition threatened to gherao AIR and Doordarshan offices for reviews of Parliament proceedings being biased in favour of the ruling party and there, reportedly, was a gherao the next day. The point however is that but for the Janata Party no other party is committed to the freedom of broadcasting which suits the government as it can build on lack of consensus even on this issue within Opposition ranks.

Dissent on the present structure of broadcasting has come from an unexpected quarter. Unlike G.

Parthasarathi, who has never uttered a word on broadcasting, Dr. P.C. Joshi who heads the TV Software Committee has stated publicly that Doordarshan does not have an Indian personality and the present structure of broadcasting hampers creativity. How Dr. Joshi's final report will reflect this view remains to be seen, but the important point is that he has had the courage to arrive at this conclusion and say it. One could add to this the corpus of articles published in reputable journals with genuine interest in the development of electronic media for the public good, and not find a single line in support of the electronic media chaos that the government has let loose, primarily to serve its own political ends.

What then must be done? The Government of India makes it clear that absolute control to broadcast media is its constitutional right. In the discharge of this function, State governments may be consulted but final decisions affecting policy, programming, management and administration as, e.g., in the case of an army, rest with the Centre and the Centre alone. Apparently, if an army is to save a country from external aggression, AIR and Doordarshan in our case exist to save the people from the diversity of opinion that the Indian press may offer because at least part of the press is considered an internal adversary.

The Prime Minister is on record for stating that broadcast media exist, as they do, for confidence-building — but confidence in what? — of course in the government and the ruling party which some of the press is supposed to undermine. Thus, government's broadcast media are to provide a corrective process — and what a corrective process it has been! Truth about Assam killings should be suppressed; blindings in Bhagalpur should not be mentioned; during Assembly elections every effort should be made to make the ruling party candidates win; reasons for ministerial musical chairs must never be explained; it should be denied that an heir has been appointed, and yet he must be built up not on national but personal grounds — and so on — the list of misuse of

the media is endless, much more so now than in the Emergency.

Under the circumstances, what can the public do, what can an individual do or, for that matter, what can even a non-Congress(I) State Government do before the emasculation of the Indian broadcast media becomes total, which it is nearly so by now? The only remedy is the resort to the Constitutional provision in Article 19(1) (a) which is as much concerned with the freedom of the press as of broadcasting, though it does not directly refer to either, perhaps through the wisdom of our constitution-makers who might have taken such freedom for granted. There seems no other reason why they did not spell it out.

As the eminent jurist, A.G. Noorani, in an article in the *Indian Express* some time back pointed out in another context (Bihar Press Bill), 'it is time now to take a stand squarely on the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression and claim all that it implies.' He said, 'the content of this right has been sadly underestimated. It is nearly a decade since the Supreme Court last delivered a major ruling on this right. Meanwhile, the Court has taken impressive strides in expanding the frontiers of the citizens' right.'

And, finally, in this context, it is worth quoting from a letter that Mehra Masani, with long years of broadcasting experience (she was also Member-Secretary of the Chanda Committee) has said in a letter to a Delhi fortnightly (*India Today*). 'I believe the time has come to challenge the law courts, the Government of India's misuse of the media....' She mentions a U.S. Supreme Court judgement: 'It is the right of viewers and listeners, not the right of broadcasters, which is paramount. It is the right of the public to receive suitable access to social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences which is crucial here. That right may not be constitutionally abridged either by Congress (US) or by the Federal Communications Commission (US Govt. agency regulating broadcasting).'

A propaganda machine

DILIP BOBB

THERE was a surrealistic symbolism in the launching of INSAT-IB which had very little to do with any jumps, quantum or otherwise, in technology. The fact that the satellite will inspire Doordarshan to beam its battery of bilge into 1,00,000 additional rural homes was just one more rude indication of the awesome reach and potential propaganda power of the electronic media — particularly when coupled with the sudden, unexpected announcement last July of the government's Rs 68-crore 'special crash plan' to herd 70 per cent of the Indian population under the television umbrella by the end of 1984.

There is more symbolism contained in the date. Orwell's 1984 with its futuristic glimpse into the big-brother-is-watching syndrome is likely to be in evidence in India by that date, except in this case it will be in reverse — the big-brother-is-telling syndrome. Naturally, what it will be telling will be what big brother wants the people to hear.

As there invariably is in such cases, that date has another more immediate and urgent significance. Unless the Prime Minister announces a snap poll, the next test of her electoral popularity occurs in January, 1985 and only the very naive or the very committed can afford to ignore the connection between the government's surprise crash plan for Doordarshan and the date of the elections. If any doubting Thomases still remain, the latest indicator in the form of the government's second

surprise announcement in two months — the ruthless slashing of duties on electronic items, mainly television sets — should finally dispel any misconceptions regarding the immediate and future role of the government-controlled electronic media.

The clues, if any were required, are contained in plenty in the purple prose of the crash plan. Of the 125 transmitters to be installed under the plan, no less than 112 will be low-power transmitters. Translation; the current trend of monitoring all broadcasts from the relative safety of New Delhi will be a permanent fixture. Reading between the lines of the crash plan, it is painfully obvious that no programmes will originate from State capitals or district headquarters. Any such programmes will be dispatched to Delhi for inclusion — after requisite screening in the national telecast.

Already, there are crystal-clear indications as to the short-term objectives. Starting last June, Doordarshan and AIR have become the sole media for a massive propaganda blitz launched by the government aimed at giving the Prime Minister and the heir apparent, her son Rajiv, a blanket boost. With relentless regularity, Doordarshan and AIR have been headlining relatively minor engagements or statements by the Gandhis while sidelining or blissfully ignoring matters of more national impact. Mrs Gandhi, it may be argued, deserves prominent coverage if only owing to her posi-

tion. But Rajiv? Officially, he is just one of five general-secretaries in the ruling party's organisational heirarchy. Yet, he is being afforded more air time than cabinet ministers and State chief ministers whether as chief guest at a freestyle wrestling charade or lending his increasingly weighty presence to a tree-planting ceremony. India's electronic media has become a medium with one rather desperate message.

Statistically, it is easy to see why the government should succumb to the expensive indulgence envisioned in its recent policy pronouncements. Under the crash plan, Doordarshan's target audience will be a mind-boggling 420 million and, with the enforced pruning of prices of television sets, that figure could be even higher. The political implications of that are patently obvious. A majority of the new audience will be the huge amorphous mass of rural India who have no other access to the realities of the outside world. Ironically enough, the new propaganda plan, which is what the crash plan clearly amounts to, comes at a time when the demand for more autonomy in the electronic media by the States, particularly the ones not governed by the ruling party, has reached new decibels. At the same meeting where Minister of State for Information, H.K.L. Bhagat, sprung his surprise special crash plan, the information ministers of four States, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Tripura, made a plaintive plea for more involvement in the workings of the electronic media.

There is very little likelihood of that happening. The electronic media is too potentially powerful a tool for any government to ignore. There are innumerable examples of the political contours that Doordarshan and AIR are rapidly acquiring: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao being refused time to broadcast an emergency appeal on the eve of the State government employees strike earlier this year; the menacing undertones behind the mysterious appearances and disappearances on the screen of Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari; the downgrading of the information and broadcasting ministry after the exit of the ebullient and egotistic

Vasant Sathe to bring it under more careful control.

All these are grim pointers to a grim future. The Janata government, for all its pious posturing on press freedom and its 85-page White Paper on the misuse of the mass media during the Emergency, had little hesitation in using Doordarshan and AIR for political advantage, thus leaving nobody in any doubt that Marshall McLuhan's — and lately H.K.L. Bhagat's — 'global village' will have just one headman.

The real tragedy, of course, is the death knell all this will sound for any improvement in the quality of programming. Instead of being a cradle of creativity, the electronic media will be, and already is, a graveyard of smothered talent. Centralisation of control over programmes puts a Damocles sword over the heads of any producer or filmmaker situated outside Delhi. Initiative and imagination will be given a decent burial and the 'bureaucratic element forcibly injected. In fact, it already exists. Visit any Doordarshan or AIR centre and the soporific atmosphere tells its own sad story. Bombay TV is one prime example. Two years ago, its originality and vitality were a refreshing change from the dreary, predictable 'broadcasts' being put out over the national hook-up. The talent, however latent, was there and it was exciting to imagine its evolution. Today, whatever individual talent Bombay Doordarshan nurtured has left in disgust or succumbed to the opiate effects of the fantasy world that the electronic media in this country resides in. Pick up any national newspaper and the unnatural differences in its headlines and treatment of stories and what is broadcast on radio or TV would be laughable were it not so tragic.

Even more tragic is the story of a retired station director of AIR who sadly confessed to a working group on the autonomy of broadcasting, led by journalist B.G. Verghese, that he 'joined Akashvani a fearless man but retired a timid person.' Such stories are legion and only serve to symbolise the suffocating grip that the government has on the electronic

media and one which it has no intention of relinquishing.

So, what does the future hold? Can autonomy replace autocracy? And with what results? The answers are not difficult to find. The myriad committees the government has set up to examine the case of more autonomy in the electronic media are nothing more than conscience-salving cosmetics. One of the major recommendations of the committee setup in 1980 to examine this precise question was that 'the focus should be on information rather than on individuals', a recommendation that has been disdainfully ignored. And, yet, the advantages of autonomy are tremendous if one ignores the political aspect.

The efforts of a group at the Space Applications Centre (SAC) in Ahmedabad offer ample proof of that. Set up seven years ago as an experiment to use TV for rural growth and awareness in Pij village in Kheda district in Gujarat, the programmes have been path-breaking in terms of the social awareness they have created in what is only a small pocket of rural India. Drawn from disparate regions and backgrounds, the only common denominator the producers shared was youth, an unbounded enthusiasm, and lack of experience in broadcasting. They had no reputations to fortify, no axes to grind, no additions to bureaucratic narcotics.

Pij TV started, as all programmes logically should, with extensive field research about the real-life problems faced by the inhabitants of the 100 villages that the transmitter covered. Producers and technicians spent a month living among the villagers, sharing their minor triumphs and tragedies and getting under their skins. The programmes that resulted from this exposure were eye-openers in many ways. Here, for the first time, were imaginative, rural-oriented programmes that caught social evils by the scruff of their necks and shook them in front of a mesmerised audience. The dialect was local as were the characters but it was the subjects that fired the imagination. Dowry, widow re-marriage, bonded labour, discrimination faced by Harijan children. These were gut issues and highlight-

ing them in an imaginative format was both daring and novel. The shows were an instant success and offered concrete proof, if any were needed, of the positive side of the electronic media; its potential for social change and awareness.

Sadly, PIJ TV, as it came to be popularly known, was severely limited in scope. The transmission was for an hour, with half of that period given to regular broadcasts by Doordarshan and PIJ given the other half. Further, it only affected a minuscule proportion of the rural audience.

But, however limited, the experiment did prove one vital aspect of broadcasting — credibility. Perhaps for the first time Doordarshan had an audience that truly believed in what was appearing on the screens because it was happening to them every day of their lives. Unfortunately, that was just one tiny candlelight in an area of huge and dangerous darkness.

It cannot be denied that the only programmes watched regularly on Doordarshan are the Hindi films and the mindless extravaganzas churned out by the Bombay film industry. The rest is dismissed as junk which unfortunately it happens to be. Lack of competition destroys any remaining traces of creativity overlooked by the government's all-pervasive monitoring. For news that is objective and unbiased most educated Indians tune in to the BBC. For entertainment, those that are in proximity switch on Sri Lanka, Dacca or Pakistan TV. And now, the video boom sweeping the country is yet another warning signal that Doordarshan's impact is dwindling rapidly, at least in urban India.

There is every reason to believe that the mandarins in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry are aware of this. Hence, it would be overly optimistic or even ridiculous to imagine that any autonomy is possible in the near future. Yet, it would also do no harm to fantasise on what changes it would bring and what the wasted potential is.

During the height of the Falklands war, the head of the BBC was

asked by the government why his reporters were filing figures of British casualties. His answer; we are not the propaganda wing of the British government. That widely reported exchange did more to boost the credibility of the BBC than its actual coverage of the event in question. The BBC, both television and radio, are illuminating examples of the electronic media operating autonomously and yet being part of the government machinery. For quality and credibility, the BBC is streets ahead of its nearest competitor and its radio news is heard overtly or covertly in every country in the world.

BBC's evolution is significant if only for its adaptability to the Indian situation, however bleak that prospect might seem. Till 1955, the BBC was the only broadcasting medium in Britain with a monopoly over both radio and television. Even as its international credibility and standing grew, competition was introduced in the form of a second channel, BBC 2. Today, there are two more under the supervision of the Independent Broadcasting Authority — ITV and Channel 4, all operating independently, and successfully. Channel 4, the newcomer to Britain's broadcasting scene, offers the best example of a powerful medium like television being used for what it was originally intended — to educate, inform and entertain without losing sight of its social obligations. Channel 4 has another special significance for India. It was established as an alternate channel particularly for the minorities in Britain which mainly consist of immigrants from the sub-continent.

The way Channel 4 evolved is a model of contemporary broadcasting technique and technology. The BBC first approached both major immigrant groups in Britain — the Afro-Caribbean and the Asians — for their views on what kind of programmes they would like to cater to their special needs. This was in the mid '60s when the Asians found language the single biggest obstacle to integration, unlike the Afro-Carribbeans. The West Indian immigrants declined any special programmes since they already spoke

the language. The Asian community leaders, however, came out strongly in favour of special programmes for ethnic minorities. Out of that two way interaction grew the BBC's Asian Unit which produces two television programmes and one radio programme every week.

The Sunday morning television programme, *Nai Zindagi, Naya Jeevan*, provides viewers with a well-balanced mixture of information regarding immigration, race relations and other aspects of immigrant life as well as entertainment in the form of popular and traditional Indian music embellished with interviews with prominent visitors from the sub-continent. Another programme was aimed directly at Asian housewives and proffered much-needed advice about education, social service and health care. Though largely educative and informative, the format of the programmes was livened up by imaginative scripts and real-life scenarios like *Parosi*, a dramatised serial focussing on the problems of an Asian family attempting to settle down in Britain.

By the late 70s, a major problem arose. A new generation of immigrants had emerged, one that had very limited exposure to their mother tongue, having been educated in British schools. Most spoke English and faced problems that were vastly different from their parents or grandparents. The BBC's dilemma was solved, and in a highly successful manner, by the introduction of Channel 4, the first regular English language programme for Asians and immigrants from the West Indies.

The most valuable spin-off from Channel 4 has been the mounds of hidden talent it has managed to unearth. The instant popularity of Channel 4 has succeeded in attracting some of the most talented Asians working in the British press. All production teams are multi-racial and they have set new and exciting standards in investigative journalism with their focus on racialism in organisations such as the police force and illegal practices within the communities. Yet, despite the apparent success of Channel 4, the BBC Advisory Committee has already initiated a debate on what the pro-

gramme contents should be in the foreseeable future.

The lessons contained in the British example are too important to be ignored outright. With the advanced technology at her disposal, India is far ahead of any other South Asian country in terms of infrastructure and potential. Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh, for instance, rely heavily on foreign programmes. If Doordarshan and AIR were to attain a fraction of the credibility that BBC enjoys, its impact on the region would be tremendous as would its ability to influence opinion.

The Verghese Committee, in its exhaustive two-volume report on the broadcasting media, made a myriad recommendations that were workable and desirous. The basic recommendation was the establishment of an autonomous corporation to be called Akash Bharati. The other major recommendation was that broadcasting freedom should be equated with freedom of expression and be enshrined in the Constitution as part of Article 19 (A). Tragically, it was the Janata government which perceived hidden dangers in the report and replaced it with a weak-kneed and watered down version which was placed before Parliament. The fall of the government effectively buried the report and that was the final epitaph for autonomy. Mrs Gandhi is on record as having pledged that the aim of her government was to improve the quality of programmes but that broadcasting agencies should stay under the control of the government.

There is a media advisory committee that the present government has given birth to under Mrs Gandhi's special envoy and former diplomat, G. Parthasarathi. Its brief is to recommend ways to bring about structural changes in the electronic media. But there always is a catchword in such committees. In this case, the catchword is 'under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting', which effectively rules out any prospect of autonomy or independence.

Fortunately, it is still not too late. Though forcibly suppressed,

the talent is still there. Some of the programmes aired during events like the Asiad and the Non-aligned Summit were refreshingly different and imaginatively produced. Similarly, the bureaucracy syndrome exists but has not been around long enough to have left permanent scars. With the growing clamour for regional programmes and more freedom to the States to produce and air their own programmes, a powerful case exists for introducing additional channels and broadening considerably the scope and content of both Doordarshan and AIR.

The Verghese Committee recommendation for an autonomous corporation makes the most sense. This could be made up of representatives from government, the existing print media, the corporate sector who are the eventual sponsors and from Doordarshan and AIR. Like the BBC, any change would have to be carefully considered and introduced gradually and only after thorough market research and, if possible, a national debate on what form the changes should take. A second channel is already being talked about by people like Bhagat but unless it is made relevant and meets a certain positive requirement, it will be of little use. There are enough experienced broadcasters of Indian origin in Channel 4 who can easily be persuaded to lend their not inconsiderable talents.

During Asiad, expert sportscasters from the BBC were flown in to give Doordarshan producers and commentators a crash course on modern day techniques and the change was obvious. This could easily be done on a longer-term contract basis. This will also help in allowing new and untapped talent to emerge from the shadows to which it has been consigned. Without competition, Doordarshan is doomed. The video invasion has already witnessed a marked reduction in viewers and unless the government wakes from its slumber, *Yes Minister* will be the only programme with a regular following. The greatest irony, of course, is that *Yes Minister* is a comic farce on the workings of government and the bureaucracy. There is definitely a message in that somewhere.

The pulped tomato scenario

AMRITA ABRAHAM

IT is not unusual to hear wailing sirens, female screams and crashing furniture late at night in a lower middle working class colony in Bombay. It is well past Doordarshan's hour and the blue electronic glow from more than one tenement suggests the video cassette recorder rules here too. You can buy an hour's video pornography with a

Rs 5 extra-special cup of tea in suburban restaurants, two, even three Hindi films on video with your long-distance luxury bus ticket, and video is the extra thrown in with the other uncertain delights of a tourist package.

Video in India is the triumph of Japanese technology, Gulf incomes

and the Hindi cinema's celebration of the lumpen proletariat in the form of Amitabh Bachchan. The Government of India has contributed only accidentally to all of this.

The accelerated spread of technology does not stop with video. Cable television, more strictly closed-circuit television, has enormous possibilities. Three companies offer packaged programmes of a few hours' duration in Bombay and the cost has been coming down. At one time one of these cable companies incorporated its own news capsule in an evening's programme. The time cannot be far off for a city like Bombay, when video programmes as a magazine of entertainment, news, information and local advertising will be produced and delivered each day at the doorstep like the morning's paper. At present it costs no more than Rs 200 a month (after an initial deposit) to get an alternative channel to Doordarshan.

The government pursues its own purposes only to find that market forces and technology have purposes of their own as well. In its excitement over the propaganda possibilities of Asiad, New Delhi opened the door first to colour television, then to imported TV sets and VCRs from putative relatives abroad, then to low power (imported) transmitters which in turn has spawned H.K.L. Bhagat's 'special expansion plan' for television. Meanwhile, a multiplicity of imperatives is working to produce two million more television sets in perhaps just over two years: left-over knock-down components imported during Asiad, the difficulties of overseas markets for manufacturers in electronics export zones, the reduction in excise levies on black and white sets to be followed very likely with corresponding cuts on colour sets, and the special expansion plan itself which provides for transmission to 70 per cent of the population but not the receivers.

One S-band transponder from Insat-IB and 132 low power transmitters and 47 high power transmitters will take programmes from New Delhi to 48 crore people (at

present the network covers 12.5 crores), in a couple of years' time. This at any rate is Bhagat's belief and he has been given Rs 68 crores and high level support to back it. 117 towns with a population of one lakh and above and surrounding villages will be New Delhi's captive audience. Or will they?

For the moment, Bhagat would seem to have the new technology on his side though not as much as he thinks. Some 20 per cent of the targeted audience will receive a 'weak TV signal' for which read patchy or no coverage at all. Even so; half of India is a more ambitious target than anything the third world has seen.

The Rs 68 crores is all going on the transmission; manufacturers may cope and turn out cheap—Rs 1000 a set—receivers. The real hurdle is the software for which Bhagat is not well equipped at all. This dilemma was captured unintentionally in a three-minute colour film that Films Division has been exhibiting recently. Even by the FD's standards of creativity it is an odd film. A hand drops one lush red tomato after another into a wide-mouthed glass jar. There is at first no explanation for this slow, calculated operation. When the third tomato goes in, the jar is overfull. The disembodied hand then screws a lid onto the jar forcing down the tomatoes and squashing them. The film crackles into life and—to incredulous titters and gasps from Bombay's jaded audiences—tells us we must plan our families.

One could construct one or two more appropriate messages about disembodied hands and disasters, but the scenario is not dissimilar to what has happened to official television in the country. In the popularity ratings, Hindi cinema in one form or another and some of the programmes imported from abroad (that range from the utterly futile to some interesting though largely outdated BBC programmes) far outstrip Doordarshan's own productions of official information (disinformation?) and large stretches of tedium and absurdity (though there have been the occasional good talk program-

mes and documentaries). The rates for commercials bear this out; Doordarshan for instance allows only 20-second commercials with foreign programmes at twice the rate of the two minutes allowed on local productions.

It was no surprise then that the I & B minister was shopping around in Bombay in August for talent and funds. Two programming ideas that were discussed with various people were sponsored programmes and television feature films. These ideas are not new but Bhagat's discussions with film producers and advertisers suggest that some definite decisions are being taken about how much time will be allowed for commercials on sponsored programmes, how many programmes and what kind of programmes can be imported by sponsors, whether video equipment can be imported for local production of TV films by independent companies and how and what television films will be funded. Differences exist but advertisers and producers are beginning to feel encouraged that the minister will meet them halfway.

The television feature films Bhagat has in mind are 'message' films modelled on Shyam Benegal's 'Manthan', a development film after the government's own heart. If such a film about the government's showpiece on milk cooperatives, credibly wrapped in drama and narrative, can be produced by the commercial sector it is argued, why can't the government do it? This kind of 'middle' cinema, neither high inscrutable 'art' nor fixated on sex and violence, would mesh with NFDC's new unwritten brief as well and would overcome Doordarshan's perennial shortage of equipment, talent and finance.

If these are to be important components of New Delhi's programming it would mean turning more and more to the market, to independent film makers and sponsors, and it would mean trying to direct the market (by approving the subject and approach of television films) to suit the government's broad purposes. Can it be done? Films Division has tried it largely with frustrating results. A better question is, does the government have any other option?

It is fashionable to suppose that the new television expansion plan is a great propaganda juggernaut carrying the ruling party's point of view to the sticks. It is that but it will be drawn into place for other reasons, under different steam. The fact is that the existing television market (of some two million sets) was created by Hindi cinema and the propaganda rode in on the back of it. A corresponding sequence could work to expand the market. But the third leg of the programming — call it socially useful programmes, educational or development-oriented programmes — can be produced only through a selective use of the talents in the market. This more or less is what Bhagat's shopping expedition was all about.

The very centralisation of information output, New Delhi's 'national programme,' calls for a level of sophistication in programme production that Doordarshan sorely lacks. If New Delhi is going to put out what 50 to 70 per cent of the country will see all together each evening for several hours, is there a universally understood cultural product besides the commercial cinema (Hindi and south Indian)? That is the challenge: to use the techniques, the great simplifications, the entertainment qualities, the enormous technical skills and non-verbal methods, of the commercial cinema and to put them all to different uses.

To the extent that independent film makers can retain their professional integrity, television and film makers will benefit. Some State governments, notably West Bengal, have shown that it is possible to keep their hands off and end up with some very good work indeed ('Dhakal', 'Chokh' etc.). Of course, the bottom line in the relationship between government media and finance and independent film makers is political cinema. (Utpalendu Chakravarty is having trouble getting a documentary past the censors in West Bengal in which there are critical references to the CPI). But outside of that and other carefully drawn guidelines (about handling communal tensions, for instance, or hurting religious sensibilities) there

is no reason why a wide range of themes and issues cannot be left to the film maker. Still, being optimistic and 'positive' about the new possibilities, the whole technical apparatus for making television feature films would be far cheaper than the existing system of shooting in 35mm or even 16mm.

Once again, we have the hoary history of Films Division as an irrefutable argument against all this and are left with the need to find some other arrangement that will meet the often deeply conflicting purposes of independent film makers and the government. Left to itself the market would probably produce a great deal of garbage. Left solely to the central government to direct the market, the best we can expect is more garbage and the furthering of one set of interests, the ruling party's.

It is no solution either merely to expand Doordarshan's own production units: the dead hand of official proprietary has killed more talent, initiative and hope than the idiocies of the Hindi cinema. The awards and kudos that some of Doordarshan's producers have received should be seen not only as the merit deserved for a good piece of work but for surviving; for surviving the official culture of censorship and bureaucratic indifference to quality. There was a time when Bombay Doordarshan put out programmes in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and English for about five hours a day and its eleven or so producers had the use of one functioning camera between them! The official media punishes producers for infringing certain political taboos or for alienating certain powerful in-house and out-house interests, not for the poor quality of work.

The ideal 'umpire' between government and film makers would have to be mixed committees of citizens, film makers and government, such as preside over censor boards, and other cinema related institutions. Alternatively, we can go back to the Verghese Committee's recommendations on franchises: to 'let out' fixed blocks of television time to State governments, institu-

tions such as universities, special interest groups such as environmental bodies. A watchdog committee would be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that franchises are not misused for partisan or damaging purposes and that a certain minimum technical standard is maintained.

New Delhi is not going to loosen its hold on television voluntarily. But the process of inching television away from government has begun. It's too much to expect anything like the plurality and multiple choices that the free press presents. But a few things would soften the harsh glare of this non-information medium: greater devolution of programme production powers to State governments (it is not clear what scope they will have under the new special expansion plan), to the market, meaning independent film makers of documentaries and features as well as advertising sponsors who can shop locally or abroad for programmes, and who may sometimes turn out to be especial interest groups who can put together the money for a programme, for instance, on urban slums and the housing crisis.

In a sense we should be grateful for the appalling quality and (like the pulped tomato film) the absurd content of some of Doordarshan's output. Propaganda time is when everyone takes a break so the 'brain-washing' can cause only limited damage. This is reasonable enough for those occasions when ex-Chief Minister Antulay comes on the screen every evening (as he did when in power) to exhort or promise. But when the same infelicities of technique and approach are applied to, say, a sports programme, we have something to worry about. For all the technology and manpower press-ganged into making Asiad the greatest spectacle of the decade, there was a great deal and repeated clumsiness in presentation. Everybody has stories about sitting through interminable early rounds of badminton or some athletics and finding at the final lap that they were back in the studio or some other stadium altogether. The coverage of cricket is much improved these days, but football and hockey are often

given a bird's eye view. It is difficult to tell whether these are the result of technical restraints or human misjudgements. There is no penalty for these mishaps—viewers and advertisers have no alternatives.

The hope is that occasional foreign footage on Wimbledon or World Cup football will teach both producers and audiences to expect more. Television unlike radio is fortunate to be given vast acres of critical space in newspapers. That is a touchstone of a kind for Doordarshan and has on rare occasions been successful. Sports programmes are of inherent interest to the kind of universal audience New Delhi would need for its expanded national programme. One of the obvious means of cultivating new audiences is the instructional programme. Doordarshan broadcast one on football recently which was made in East Europe. It was far too technical and could have been riveting only for football fans. If Doordarshan had used an Indian team to display the state of the art and interspersed this with some wildly exciting Calcutta games, it would have been a more worthy introduction to the game. Sports is an area where Doordarshan would do well to concentrate more of its money and skills.

As western and, later, third world experience with television has shown, the search for a universal audience has ended with the discovery of America: popular, well-made but instantly forgettable serials. Doordarshan has filled many empty hours with such programmes, some of them highly popular, and advertising sponsors will be tempted to invest in similar programmes. A certain number of these entertainment films will be inevitable but a deliberate effort should be made not to succumb to the easy and relatively cheaper way out and every 'Lucy' show that slips into the programming should be balanced with the more serious (e.g. science) programmes also produced by foreign networks. The 'cultural imperialism' of western programmes is as powerful as that of Hindi cinema and the way to fight them is not to ban them altogether but to give audiences other worlds to see as well.

One of these other worlds is 'the rest of India' — not the tourist brochure or paternalistic tribal films that Films Division is so addicted to but life in other parts of the country, warts and all. Doordarshan should not in all fairness be asked to handle such subjects since its producers have perforce developed so many politically sensitive antennae which has affected their vision. Faced with a 'sensitive issue', they prefer not to touch it at all rather than find some other treatment. This is when the government, if it has the courage, should turn to independent film makers. (It would also give the government an alibi when confronted by the lunatic fringe demanding censorship when the truth hurts).

In this discussion of the possibilities that the new television expansion plan opens up, I have concentrated on one sector: New Delhi's broadcasts to the nation. This leaves out regional broadcasts and the need for local, community television. I have not stated the case for and against New Delhi controlling so much broadcasting time but some of the arguments are implicit in the discussion. The ideal television set-up may have been proposed in the Verghese Committee's recommendations: here I have been concerned with the small ground that the market can win from the government inch by inch.

To summarise: New Delhi's imperialist aims have given us, mid-Plan, a huge 'special' plan for television which could cover half or more of the population. Hindi cinema will open up the market, the ruling party will then follow up with its own slanted broadcasts. The partially encouraging sign is that the rest of the time must be filled with other material: some will be vapid entertainment, some shoddy 'socially-useful' work from Doordarshan but there is a larger opportunity to be seized now for better programmes since the government must turn to finance and material to the market. A small proportion of good programmes is all that any kind of television system in the world — government-controlled or independent — can produce.

The constitutional position

A. G. NOORANI

IF All India Radio and Doordarshan have been able to get away with sheer murder of news and information, it is due not only to the apathy of public opinion or the indifference of the political parties. It is due to no small extent to the legal illiteracy of the Indian elite.

The very concept of a State-owned and State-controlled electronic media is as obsolete and obscene as the thought of a State-owned and State-controlled press. As the Report of the Working Group on Autonomy for Akashvani and Doordarshan noted, 'Modern opinion regards autonomy of broadcasting organisations to be as essential as freedom of the press. The Declaration of Mass Communication Media and Human Rights adopted by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1970 laid down specifically that

"neither individual enterprises nor financial groups should have the right to institute a monopoly in the fields of press, radio or television nor should government-controlled monopoly be permitted." It declared that "the independence of the press and other mass media from control by the State should be established by law. Any infringement of this independence should be justiciable by Courts and not by executive authorities (Article 4)." Another principle was that "the internal organisation of mass media should guarantee the freedom of expression of the responsible editors. Their editorial independence should be preserved" (Article 6).'

Since this was written in March 1978, the Supreme Court of India has made impressive strides in administrative law for securing fair play

towards the citizen from the administration.

It has ruled that 'Whatever be its activity, the government is still the government and is subject to restraints inherent in its position in a democratic society.. The constitutional power conferred on the government cannot be exercised by it arbitrarily or capriciously or in an unprincipled manner. It has to be for the public good.'

Can these observations not be invoked to bring to book AIR and Doordarshan which are in law 'attached' departments of the government? Of course, proof that the government of the day is using them 'arbitrarily or capriciously or in an unprincipled manner' will be necessary. But is that difficult given the long and clear record of abuse?

On March 16, 1982, the guidelines for news coverage by AIR and Doordarshan were laid before Parliament. One of them read thus: 'Dissemination of information, news and comments in Akashwani, Doordarshan and Films Division should be done in a fair, objective and balanced manner, including contrasting points of view, with emphasis on events and developments. References to personalities may be made primarily for providing human interest.'

This guideline is judicially enforceable, a fact which neither the government nor its opponents seem to realise. For, the Supreme Court has categorically ruled, 'It is a well-settled rule of administrative law that an executive authority must be rigorously held to the standards by which it professes its actions to be judged and it must scrupulously observe those standards on pain of invalidation of an act in violation of them.' Ergo, AIR can be compelled to line up to its own guidelines by the Courts.

S. 2 (2) (b) of the British Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, 1973, is similarly worded. It imposes on the IBA a duty to 'ensure that the programmes broadcast ... maintain ... proper balance ... in their subject matter.' In an historic case, decided on February 16, 1979, Lord Ross compelled the IBA to maintain a

proper balance between the two sides in the referendum on the Scotland Act, 1978. The four leading parties, (Conservatives, Labour, Liberal and Scottish National) had reached an accord on time-sharing. But Tam Dalyell, M.P., and his colleagues on the 'Labour Vote "No" Campaign Committee' rightly complained that while the Tories were unsure, the rest were committed to a 'Yes'.

Lord Ross' ruling is pertinent. 'Where the subject matter of programmes being broadcast is the referendum, I am of the opinion that a proper balance must be maintained between programmes favouring "Yes" and programmes favouring "No".' That balance required equal time, he emphasised.

So much for the strength of the existing rules of administrative law alone. The Constitution fortifies the position and makes it unassailable. The fundamental rights to equality (Art. 14) and to freedom of speech and expression (Art. 19 (1) (a)) are as applicable to prevent misuse of AIR and its hapless twin as to any other government agency.

The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, enacted during the Bhutto era on the basis of an all-party accord, was modelled on our Constitution. The fundamental rights and the writ jurisdiction of the High Courts (Art. 19(9)) were similar to our Constitution. In 1977, during the fateful election campaign, the opposition took Bhutto to court with impressive results.

On March 2, 1977, the Lahore High Court directed Pakistan's Broadcasting and Television Corporations to 'restore a fair balance in their coverage of the election campaigns of the political parties taking part in the general election.' Allowing a writ petition filed by Mohammed Aslam Salini, Assistant Secretary-General of the Jamaat-e-Islami, a full bench of the Court, comprising Chief Justice Aslam Riyaz Hussain and Justices K.E. Chouhan and Neem Hussain Shah, directed that 'without prejudice to the editorial discretion of the officers concerned, the coverage of the election campaigns of the PPP (Pakistan People's

Party) and the PNA (Pakistan National Alliance) should be equitably balanced, unless there are explicit directions to the contrary from the government in respect of any specific programme.'

The two corporations were further directed to 'either refrain from comments on and reports of the election campaigns, or else ensure that these are fair to both the PPP and PNA. The TV coverage of public meetings shall either feature the direct performance of the leaders of both parties or none at all. This also pertains to Bhutto (Prime Minister) as Chairman of the ruling PPP. But these directions will not be applicable when Bhutto addresses the nation on some major public issue...'

The Court's order has been quoted *in extenso* because it serves as an excellent model on which to seek relief from our Supreme Court or the High Courts.

There is an overwhelming array of judicial pronouncements on the unconstitutionality of the use of State-owned media for partisan ends in countries where the Constitution guarantees these two vital rights — freedom of expression and the right to equality.

Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights embodies the right to freedom of expression and Article 14, the right to freedom from discrimination. When France ratified the Convention, it realised fully what that spelt for its law establishing State monopoly in the electronic media (O.R.T.F.). It made an express reservation excluding it from Article 10 — a tacit admission that the monopoly violated the citizens' rights.

Prof. Francis G. Jacobs rightly opines in his commentary on the Convention that 'Whether or not private broadcasting is permitted, the law must ensure that there is freedom for political views to be expressed without discrimination, especially during election campaigns. Thus, the Commission has stated that an issue might arise under Article 10 alone or in conjunction with Article 14 of the Convention if, for

example, one political party were excluded from broadcasting facilities at election time while other parties were given broadcasting time. 'This view seems a logical inference from the impact of television on public opinion. Political freedom, which once depended largely on freedom of assembly and freedom of association, now rests as much on freedom of expression and independence in the press, radio, and television' (italics mine throughout).

T

The autonomy and independence of West Germany's radio and TV are due very largely to a ruling of its Federal Constitutional Court delivered on February 28, 1961, popularly known as the 'Television Judgment'. Apart from commenting on the federal aspect — the Union is in charge of the technical aspects, the transmission of the programmes while the Laenders are in charge of their content and production — the Court ruled also that a broadcasting service that was predominantly in the hands of one particular group is violative of Article 5 of the Basic Law which guarantees freedom of expression.

In 1971 the Court reaffirmed this principle. '*Broadcasting is the concern of the general public. It must be prosecuted in complete independence, in a non-partisan manner, and be safeguarded against all forms of influence.*' Can the Indian judiciary ignore all these rulings?

While the BBC's set-up strives to keep the organisation free of political influence, the German model seeks to ensure impartiality by having all the political elements represented on the Broadcasting Board plus other interests such as the Church, universities, the press, trade unions, etc. The broadcasting statutes confer on persons affected by a programme a right of reply and, what is more, provide that 'the claim may be enforced before ordinary courts of law.'

The US system ensures the same right although it is based entirely on private ownership of broadcasting and T.V. stations. The US Supreme Court said in the famous Red Lion Case in 1969, 'As far as the First

Amendment (*guarantee of free speech*) is concerned, those who are licenced stand on better ground than those to whom licences are refused. A licence permits broadcasting, but the licence has no constitutional right to be the one who holds the licence or to monopolise a radio frequency to the exclusion of his fellow citizens. There is nothing in the First Amendment which prevents the government from requiring a licensee to share his frequency with others and *to conduct himself as a proxy or fiduciary with obligations to present those views and voices which are representative of his community and which would otherwise, by necessity, be barred from the airways.*

The Court also upheld the Fairness Doctrine which contains two elements; namely, the 'discussion of public issue be presented on broadcast stations and that each side of those issues ... be given fair coverage.' The right of reply is secured.

Proof of compliance with the Doctrine is essential to the renewal of the Station's licence. Barry Cole and Mal Oettinger's excellent work, *Reluctant Regulators*, records how assertive citizen groups regularly appear before the Federal Communications Commission to oppose renewal of licences on the ground that the Fairness Doctrine had been violated.

A leading authority on the First Amendment to the US Constitution, embodying the guarantee of free speech, Thomas J. Emerson, has no hesitation in saying that 'if the government owned and managed all radio and television stations, it would be constitutionally bound to furnish a right of access to private expression on non-discriminatory basis... The government cannot maintain a monopoly of the airways any more than it can maintain a monopoly of the streets or of printing presses.' These observations are directly applicable to the Indian situation.

I

If the legal and constitutional position is clear beyond a shadow of doubt, its consistent and systematic violation by the Government of India is not in doubt, either.

Even a newspaper like *The Times of India*, which is so sympathetic to the regime, felt constrained to criticise AIR's impartiality in an editorial entitled 'Manipulating The News' in the issue of January 8, 1983. It said: 'All-India Radio, which has long ago forfeited all claims to professionalism, surpassed its own record in shabby partisanship in its treatment on January 6 of the sensational electoral results from Andhra and Karnataka.'

After a meticulous documentation of 'AIR Newspeak', the editorial concluded: 'It need hardly be said that if the results had gone the other way, AIR would have pulled out all the stops in singing hosannas to the ruling party. AIR's performance brought home again the simple truth that State control of information is a licence for disinformation and that without the press, the people of this country would be left in the murky gloom of ignorance, bias and half-truth.'

A

As if in penance for his sorry role in shelving the Working Group's Report, L.K. Advani from time to time publishes tabulations of AIR's slanted news coverage. The abuse of these media for sheer partisan ends is not at all difficult to prove. No court can shut its eyes to the proof. On much less data the Lahore High Court gave relief to Bhutto's opponents. Will our courts be less daring?

The Courts will not be creating any thing novel. They will only be applying the constitutional and administration law to a government agency which has escaped judicial scrutiny.

Has it never occurred to any one that we are almost alone among the democracies in having this system of ownership of electronic media? Almost, because France is another. But, then, France does not enjoy the blessings of a judicially enforceable Bill of Rights to the same extent that we do. When it ratified the European Convention, as we have noted, it made a sly reservation. The Mitterand regime has promised autonomy. India will probably be the last to discard its obsolete system.

A case for intelligence

KERSY KATRAK

IT is now familiar and accepted practice on the intellectual circuit to 'take another slap at Doordarshan' ... that most convenient and helpless of straw men. The fire drawn out by our electronic media and by its currently hopeless 'state of the art' is certainly more than justified. Yet, it is a fact that most criticism that I hear from otherwise intelligent people restricts itself to simple manifestations and proximate causes, often followed by the suggestion of appallingly straight-line solutions. 'Depoliticise it.' 'Make it autonomous.' 'Improve techniques.' 'Import techniques.' 'Export technicians for training.' 'Refuse to accept outdated hardware.' 'Conduct a talent search, and run Doordarshan by meritocracy' and so on and so forth. As though such a monstrously complex hydra could be changed to an intelligent benevolence in months.

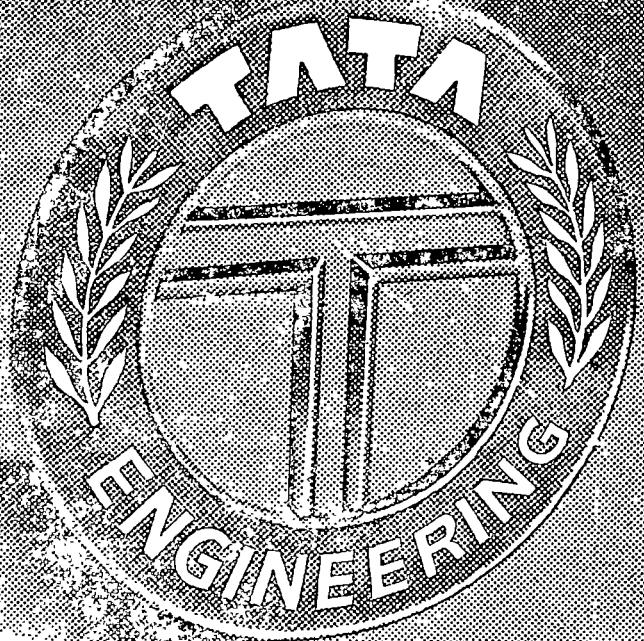
The fact of the matter is that what we see as 'wrong' is only the tip of the television ice-floe. It is practically impossible to even locate *what* is really wrong unless you know where to look. And so, of course, further reaches of investiga-

tion into ultimate causes and even penultimate solutions must remain behind doors not only closed but worse, invisible.

Charles Eames, that prolific maestro of international design, looked at the Indian *lota* in the early fifties, pronounced it perfect and then formulated his judgement in what has now become part of the body of design axiom: 'form follows function'. And what after all *are* the structure of Doordarshan, its politicisation and lack of autonomy or even its appalling paucity of technique and talent, but various aspects of form. Now, of course, the putative 'function' that such 'form' is supposed to follow does not in fact exist or rather exists as a muddle of absolute proportions.

As is usual with such governmental muddles, this one has its source at the top. Does Mrs Gandhi want the medium as one of *education* or is she looking primarily for dissemination of *information* (news and otherwise)? Does she allow for the more than marginal entertainment value which alone ensures a true captive audience? Has she consi-

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dered that a 'psychological' grasp of this medium and its potential is ten times more important than a technical excellence ('hard' and 'soft' alike)? Does she perceive television as a tool of party politics or does she see it as an image-building medium for herself and her successor or is it both and do the two coincide?

I suspect that Mrs Gandhi herself has no straight answers even in her own mind. I greatly doubt that she has even *considered* such questions seriously except when occasions for manipulation have arisen. 'Function' after all is not a thing in itself. If it's to be relatively unmuddled, it requires a long and close look at those areas which determine it. To extend and paraphrase Eames, 'If form follows function then function follows value and value follows purpose.' Now the most charitable view one can take of 'value' at the national apex is that it is uncertain and schizophrenic. As for 'purpose', the kindest of evaluations would detect a marked concern for personal gain, benevolently achieved wherever possible,

Within such an ambient, the 'function' of our electronic media will by definition remain confused and it will be worse than useless to look for solutions in the region of 'form'. An intelligent if heretical suggestion would be not to communicate at all, for that is certainly better than a continuous stream of bad, muddled communication which if continued long enough, deadens intelligence, perverts reflex, leads to confusion of values and a consequent degradation of taste.

Nevertheless, governments change, however slowly, and Prime Ministers with them. It is possible to conduct a brief hypothetical investigation into what might be done if things were different at the top. Any general discussion on the 'improvement' of Doordarshan and of our television programming must take into account three absolute fundamentals: the nature of Third World governments, the nature of the medium itself and the specific nature of the Indian psyche in its current state. I would like to be somewhat

more specific about what this trinity of absolutes stands for.

Government, *any* government will in fact have *some* influence on *all* media, autonomous or otherwise, by the simple fact of being the apex body in the land. Most 'developed' countries consider the various media to be specific channels of communication and entertainment, not national agencies of 'development' and, therefore, allow a 'free play of market forces' so to speak. Put baldly the public gets what it wants by way of programming: it had better, for that hidden but powerful deity, the commercial sponsor, would otherwise withdraw support. This may not necessarily be a 'good' thing: some of the finest minds of our generation have argued otherwise, but we are not discussing value at this juncture. With a 'Third World' government the situation is of necessity quite different. All national resources being harnessed to 'development' (the word means quite different things to different people but always manages to remain a 'good' thing!) media *must* bear the heavy and often heavy handed imprint of governmental bias. And this persists under all conditions: it does not matter a jot whether the Corporation is a nominally 'autonomous' one or not.

Governmental influence even of the most benevolent and enlightened kind works in a variety of ways at various levels, some by no means obvious. It is not so much a matter of stated and defined policies as that somewhat less clear-cut ambient of value and often undefined purpose from which manifest policies emerge. What relative importance does a government attach to the Prime Ministerial Office and the Prime Minister's person, for instance? Is it for or against the politicisation of media and what does it consider political? Does the government equate political awareness with party politics and so on and so forth.

Such things are seldom put down in print and it is such an unspoken ethos that creative man and bureaucrat alike respond to rather than stated policy which is often bland and general and heavily liable to interpretation. It may for instance

be policy to promote 'rural education' but quite what that means in television terms is heavily dependent on interpretation. And it is often a matter of sheer luck as to whether such interpretation is 'informed' or not. I am not talking here of technical ignorance which is encountered often enough but of an understanding of the nature of the medium which requires no small grasp of psychology.

Marshall McLuhan who fathered a general lay understanding of electronic media subtitled his seminal book, *Understanding Media*, thus: 'the electronic extensions of Man'. It is a brilliant encapsulation of a radical thought and gives us, at a stroke, insight into the compulsively participative quality of television, (bad television as much as good). Our touchstone here is the word 'extension'. Extension of what? The book develops the theme first of extension in a sensory mode and then goes on to suggest radically that such an extension becomes eventually a magnification of the central nervous system itself with all its ramifications of instant response, simultaneity, participation, feedback and the resultant lack of objectivity.

Put into somewhat less opaque and more descriptive language, it means this. Because television comes to you where you sit (viewership in bed is *very* high) and because it comes at the speed of light and on live programmes *simultaneous to the event*, it ceases to be reporting or description and becomes participation. And because it can give you participation in the violence of a banana revolution as easily as in the local test match, the sense of an instant global participatory awareness is equally very high. (I believe it was McLuhan who first framed the term 'global village'.) But if the participatory faculty is sharpened and increased, the critical faculty is dulled, for the 'alienation from subject' which alone makes for accurate, objective and considered reporting vanishes in the overwhelming subjective blast of instant participation and surround.

print literature but you cannot maintain the illusion that it is happening while you read it and *in your presence*. Nor are you prevented from putting the book away, re-reading a passage at leisure and forming a considered opinion, unconstrained by time or a current burst of frenzied participatory activity. The electronic media enforce snap reactions and instant judgement, a factor that has been used correctly to account for their lack of intellectual order or, put less politely, mindlessness.

Now, it is easy enough to see how such media can be manipulatively used. You can be quite implicitly but almost infallibly made to believe in the false. You can for instance be shown a heavily edited version of the Assam massacres with a markedly untruthful bias and be made to think that it is happening as you watch it, especially if the preceding programme showed a Wimbledon semi-final live and you knew by the date it *was* live. Nothing needs to be said or even implied: the electronic ambience of factual participation and the embrace of 'simultaneity' even when false will ensure mistaken understanding.

This sense of being confronted by and swallowed by a current event may explain a great many otherwise inexplicable things. Mrs Gandhi's very high top of mind awareness, perfectly natural but inexplicable in its degree of intensity. Rajiv Gandhi's greater hold on public, top of mind reflex than Vajpayee or even Chandrashekhar, falls naturally into place when you consider that he was laying foundation stones, addressing public meetings and opening factories; thrice a day on T/V, every day over the six months that Chandrashekhar walked on bandaged feet. (For Doordarshan the Chandrashekhar yatra was a non-event. Such is the power of manipulative non-coverage in a participatory medium; that even now, for a large section of the consuming public it never happened! They never *saw* it, you see!).

34 This sense of being present at a happening combined with television's invasive quality ('There's a Ford in your bedroom) may also help to ex-

plain the virulent dislike of the intellectual for Mrs Gandhi. There are quite enough legitimate reasons for disliking Mrs Gandhi's policies and political ethics alike. But I failed until very recently to grasp the reasons for personal animus until I was subjected during a prolonged hospital stay, to Doordarshan programming. Mrs Gandhi is literally all over India while simultaneously occupying, as it were, the space at the foot of your bed. Mrs Gandhi as everyone knows is anything but 'intellectual' (she herself would treat the term with contempt). She is also somewhat less than modest in her on-screen behaviour. And the intellectual growl reserved for arrogant non-members of the club is by now fairly well documented. Well, the genus intellectual is a minuscule portion of the 'captive audience' and utterly unrepresentative of our third absolute: the real Indian psyche.

Any discussion of the 'Television Effect' in India must take into account a special factor of audience quality. By this I am not talking of levels of intelligence: the rural Indian is, within the limits of his experience and perceptions, an intelligent enough man. Nonetheless, the Indian viewer holds a quite unique position. Alone among the 'Third World Developing countries' is there a general quality of mind that is capable of coping with sophisticated ideas. It is not a 'primitive' psyche but a 'mythologising' one. That is to say it deals with complex ideas and interrelationships by way of using symbol and metaphor. But this differentiates it sharply from the hard, exclusive, severely analytical mode of the western mind as much as from the highly 'social' emotional reflexes engendered by a Judaeo-Christian upbringing. 'India accepts and assimilates everything' is a truism that happens to be true. But that assimilated material is 'Indianised': put bluntly it is distorted, made passively metaphorical to fit an ancient, inclusive world view which often means that modern ideas are assimilated at a degraded level: a situation which is often worse than useless.

The point I am leading to somewhat painfully is simply this: a good Indian television programming could

by definition follow no model whatsoever. It would have to be entirely innovative, brand new and built from the ground up. An example might help to clarify the matter. Take the vexed question of education for instance. In a highly developed country there would be no need to employ the medium for such a purpose, for a developed and sophisticated educational system would already be in operation at all levels. At the same time one could not use simple minded methods that taught by talking down, however benevolently: the rural Indian citizen has always had a healthy and somewhat humorous contempt for his pandits.

For minds that are essentially sophisticated, if poorly informed, education is less a matter of teaching than of creating opportunities for learning. It is not a matter of ramming in knowledge in a random mechanical order. We are doing nothing less than opening up, exposing a highly sophisticated very ancient, very closed world view to a variety of other comprehensive views. When that *does* happen in the right way you get a Chandrashekhar and a Raman, a Bhabha and a Jagdish Chandra Bose.

Yet, in the end a revolution in television programming and structures or even a revolution in education theory requires a more fundamental revolution. As long as personal aggrandisement and party politicisation are the taken-for granted dominants of our public culture, so long will Mrs Gandhi (or somebody else) continue to stand at the head of our living rooms and lecture us. So long as outmoded notions of development remain unchallenged by emergent countervailing models, then just as surely will we be treated to that ancient television delicacy: the Prime Minister in mid-shot, cropped at the knees, commissioning a dam, opening a power station or laying the foundation stone of a steel plant. Before we can change the picture on the television screen we must change our picture of ourselves. And that requires a long and intense period of intelligent and sensitive interiorisation that has scarcely yet begun.

Thoughts on communication

YASH PAL

SPACE activities are beginning to promise the possibility of a world that *could be* qualitatively different from the one we live in. It *could be* a world where man's access, reach or interaction is not limited by geographical constraints; where consumerism may be discouraged, but there is no great lack of resources or energy; where knowledge and information originate from all minds and all things (and combinations thereof) and feed into a universally accessible reservoir, uncensored by considerations of security, politics or property rights; where capability to acquire, process and disseminate information is used for illuminating relationships and fostering integration and not for domination, centralization or homogenization; where man has finally woken up to the new space ethic which emphasizes kinship with all humanity and the planet he is currently confined to.

An appropriate transition into the space age *could* imply that the future agenda of individuals, and their corporate and national entities would be gradually altered to recognize that many of the passions and prejudices of the past arose out of parochial and tribal instincts and attitudes which have lost meaning in an age where distance stands abolished and neighbourhoods can be defined through choice rather than forced physical proximity.

Unfortunately, one sees that the new capabilities acquired through space technologies are used more often to accomplish — perhaps more

efficiently, perhaps more cheaply — objectives which arose from the imperatives of yesterday. The world of the possible has changed. I suggest that a change in the world of desirables should also happen and would be of greater significance. One hopes that the dawn of the space age may also be the dawn of a new sensitivity, a new ethic, a new morality, indeed, a new cosmic religion — I say 'religion' because the wider meaning of space consciousness goes much beyond operational rules and behaviour, to an understanding of our origins and destiny, and our relatedness in the context of the universe at large.

Much of the value in the world resides in the intimacy of close interactions; sounds, smells and touch seem to matter a great deal; unrehearsed transactional relationships among people produce a sense of belonging, an atmosphere of concern and care. What is intimately known is seldom demonic, what is not is seldom not. This is clearly because of the way man is structured and the way he evolved. The range of man's contacts and interactions started increasing slowly a few thousand years ago and has only recently been extended to cover the whole earth. But, then, even a few thousand years is a very short time for any significant evolution in the biology of man.

I suspect, further, that the reason that long range communication has generally not produced a similar larger scale atmosphere of belonging, concern and care is not because of

the range, but because of the fact that it has not had a reciprocal interactive quality. Hitherto we have had situations in which some segments of society and some countries have had a greater opportunity and capability to talk at and influence others. Besides, most of such communication has not given priority to the transmission of informal nothings which form such a large part of the interaction between close groups. For the first time in history: we now have a possibility that wide-band communication at a distance may become easy, cheap and widely available. It is also possible, through proper design and structuring, to make it interactive, two-way, balanced and factually free.

Should that come about, the implications for mutual understanding, education, and collective growth would be enormous. Indeed, it might even be possible to approach a degree of intimacy, care and belonging on the large scale, extending far beyond the distance man can walk to, or things and people he can see, touch and talk to. A large universe of thin intimacy might come to encompass the whole of humanity. This is a grandiose dream, but a possible one—possible only because man has ventured into the space era. On the other hand, what is possible is clearly not inevitable and is indeed very unlikely to be realized even in the distant future, unless we take positive steps in many directions, including drafting of legal principles.

My understanding of direct television broadcasting by satellites is based on the rather intimate experience with the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) conducted in India a few years ago. We were thrilled with the possibility of being able to reach messages to distant parts of our country, many of which have been hitherto untouched by any form of visual communication. Even though the basic cultural background of our audience in many different States was the same, there were enough differences, besides language, in habits and social and economic concerns for us to set up five different programme production centres to address differ-

ent areas and different topics. SITE is considered a very successful experiment and has resulted in gains not only in technical and engineering areas, but also in terms of social impact. All the same, many of us deeply involved in the conduct and evaluation of the experiment felt that the diversity and intimacy of the programme production set-up used for the experiment was not quite adequate. On the basis of subsequent work around one rural transmitter, we have come to the conclusion that even when we want to use the long reach of the satellite, the origination of programmes must occur in a large number of participatory programme production facilities. The satellite should be used not in an attempt to diffuse sterile information, but to integrate a large number of decentralized interactive communication efforts. The long reach should not be used by one or a few transmitting facilities, but should be given to hundreds of creative human efforts of basic value.

In the context of a country like mine, television itself is a luxury, and satellite television even more so, unless it can acquire the character of a readily accessible educational resource, the word 'educational' being interpreted in the widest possible sense. In this context, therefore, some of the discussions regarding 'freedom or control' appear to be somewhat meaningless. If we want to take a group of vaudeville players to a classroom, I do not think our freedom is seriously infringed if we have to first discuss it with the school teacher or students, so as not to interfere with the day's programme; even more so, some degree of discussion with the school management may be required if we want to go to sell candies or soda-pop.

I am not for control indeed. I am not for control even within a country. The windows should be open in all houses for breezes to come in, but the breezes should actually, and practically, flow equally in all directions. Without that there will be no exchange of information. There will be only clutter, and perhaps false fears of domination. In any case,

true enrichment of all concerned will occur only if there is an exchange and not only a one way flow from highlands to lowlands, and for exchanges to occur, 'consultations and agreements' may be necessary.

Finally, a practical point. The 1979 WARC adopted a planning approach for the direct broadcasting band at 12 GHz in respect of Regions 1 and 3. This has essentially made it impossible to broadcast television programmes in this band to another country without entering into some sort of agreement with that country. This approach has arisen through the concern of various administrations to ensure availability of a frequency orbit resource for their present and future needs. Given the results of this technical conference, it seems to me that there is no option but to enter into consultations and agreements if international television broadcasting via satellite has to become a reality. Legal principles in this regard should definitely help. In a way, the outcome of 1979 WARC may be an infringement of freedom for some. But then some degree of infringement is a necessary element of living together on this earth in an interactive atmosphere.

Invi ed talk at the symposium on Earth Oriented Activities and Legal Implications, Montreal, October 1981.



THERE has been a great deal of talk, in which many people have been involved, about the need for a better information exchange between developing countries. After having taken part in, and led, the very successful NAM meeting in New Delhi, I am wondering whether India should not think in terms of playing a certain technical role in this matter. Quite often our information with the rest of the developing countries is exchanged — news, developmental information, all such interaction — through, the metropolitan countries, through

their news agencies, with many times the messages being rooted via London or Paris or wherever. It is a pretty demeaning business to have to go through these gate-keepers and that is one reason why there is not as much interaction between developing countries as there could be.

A year and a half ago, while I was in New York, an Indian friend, a computer scientist from TIFR, had come to my office after being at a Conference in Canada. He and a colleague had a proposal, which I will elaborate presently, which has a quality of freshness — and appropriateness — that it appeals to me a great deal, something we can even ourselves do, for our benefit and the benefit of many other countries. It could give a new dimension to international communication and perhaps also give India an opportunity for playing a new role ...

Normally, we work with a satellite which is situated at an altitude of 36,000 kms. over the equator, so it is stationary. It revolves around the earth at the same angular speed with which the earth itself rotates. So, for us on the earth it is like a fixed point, six earth radii away over the equator. If you put a satellite very close to the earth, like the Rohini which was launched by SLV the other day, then it goes around the earth once in an hour and a half. If you were to put it a little higher, at 2-3 thousand kms. altitude, then it will take a little longer, 110 or 120 minutes, to go around the earth. Now, you can choose various orbits, at various inclinations to the equator.

If I were to choose an orbit over the equator the satellite would spend all its time over the tropical countries, most of which also happen to be developing countries. I put a very little transponder, a low power transponder, with a narrow band width, and since now I can borrow all sorts of other technological elements, I also put a storage, a memory and a microprocessor — a small computer. The solid state memories are cheap now, and they are becoming cheaper. I could put one megabyte for storage which would correspond to many many pages of

typed text. The microprocessors are also light weight and inexpensive, and their cost is also going down.

What is envisaged then is a satellite system which would work somewhat like this: it will come over longitude 80 degrees and talk to the station at a longitude 80 degrees. This will be a very tiny station with an antenna like a fixed TV antenna, non-tracking... send a message and say I have this message for you (which will be recorded at this station), what do you have for anybody else? The station will have the recorded messages for different addressees sitting in its memory and will transmit them in a burst. The satellite will load these in its memory and go on. The interesting feature is that it will come back within a couple of hours after delivering and collecting messages all around the earth.

So, what we have is an orbiting postman carrying a bag of post around the world, coming back every two hours, which can serve thousands of stations, distributed largely in developing countries. If you can get an answer back from anywhere in these communication difficult parts of the world, within a few hours, you have done something really remarkable. You have developed a possibility of adding an entirely new dimension to global communication: you are building a new road-way across the sky, a new river across the wilderness, and you will start developing new contacts, new connections between those who are touched by this roadway, are on the banks of this new river.

The implications of this for interaction between developing countries, in terms of developmental information exchange, political implications, are tremendous. You can put up satellites in inclined orbits, so you can also talk to developed countries, northern and southern countries, if you want...then you can have contact twice a day with all parts of the world,...

So far as India is concerned, we may not need such a satellite at this time for our national requirements because we have already invested in

our own satellite, the INSAT. However, we might think of using some of the capacity of the satellite in a similar spirit, namely, use, store and forward techniques to cover the whole country with efficient telegraph, telex services. The storage and microprocessor in this case would be at the ground stations.

These are the kind of possibilities which do exist for a country like this—with our established capabilities—both nationally and internationally, if we reorient our priorities, concerns and goals and begin to think afresh and freely. In this group, dominated by mass communicators, I might emphasise that telecommunication is exceedingly important for many, many purposes. All of us who have tried to confirm a reservation on a railway train, leave aside an interconnected train, know the difficulties in this regard.

Clearly, railway reservations, aeroplane reservations, all kinds of things for a society like ours, depend very strongly on communication and we cannot escape the need for a reliable communication infrastructure: we will have to get into the total gamut, even if of our own variety, and have storage systems, access systems, and the related channels for us to be able to function. There is no other way; you cannot use so called 'intermediate' technology for this purpose, though it has to be the 'proper' technology.

Proper or appropriate technology cannot be an archaic technology if you are going to run trains, if you are going to run aeroplanes; or else stop them, don't have aeroplanes or trains and don't come to seminars from a thousand kilometers away. If you want them then it is a necessity to run them efficiently and it is possible to do that and it is possible to configure systems in the country which will be able to do that. If we only give advance notice and set task teams and put them down to work, you will give challenges to people to fulfil themselves technically but you will also involve them socially to do something for the future of the country, even the future which Dr. Seth drew our attention to—which will arrive 7000

days from now when this century runs out.

Now, let me come back to the question of broadcasting. I mentioned early in this talk the dilemma we will face with the opening of this new chapter of satellite broadcasting. We have had some time to think about it, because India was one of the first countries to get excited about the potential and the possibilities of satellite broadcasting: in fact, in a way, the very first country. In 1975-76, we conducted the SITE experiment, termed by Arthur Clarke as the greatest communication experiment in history. I have to emphasise that it was an experiment, for learning, even though it had life size dimensions. Nobody expected to change the face of India with one year of T.V. broadcasts when everything else going on has not changed the face of India terribly much.

I do not want to discuss my personal involvement and that of many others in that historic, almost inconceivable exercise except to say that in this country we have had a great deal of excitement about the possibility of being able to reach our people far away, wherever they are, with talking, moving images; we have had this excitement because we thought that this is something which is going to be used for...at least provide the possibility of using it for...development, for education, for various other things, for essentially—for the first time—not discriminating against people who live far from the urban centres...which is not true of many of the new technologies, normally metropolitan technologies, which get invented.

We all realise that our excitement, or this proposal, is and was, rather simple-minded. You have to do a great deal more in addition to make this technical possibility bear fruit, to give it quality, to give it essence and value. We certainly can reach the electromagnetic signal to all parts of the country, irrespective of their distance from urban centres, irrespective of whether they are close to a microwave line or not, or close to a presently existing transmitter or not. This we can do—we have in-

vested in the necessary hardware for this and this will happen.

Of course, reaching the electromagnetic signal in itself does not provide access in the absence of receivers. Nor does the signal necessarily carry value or relevant communication. It is remarkable, of course, for people to be able to share the same images, to feel a sense of identity, to be able to see how the countrymen elsewhere look and behave. But, clearly, the real value of this enterprise will depend a great deal on whether you *really* share things with each other, whether you bring images from many many places and the images and experiences come with equal validity from everywhere to everywhere because only that is real sharing.

In mentioned in the beginning the problem that a medium of long range interaction like a satellite—which allows the reach of one to many—carries with it the inherent danger that it can become a medium of centralisation, even indoctrination. This I have said for many many years, and many others have also worried about this. The real challenge lies in finding ways of moving this medium—which so easily demands to become a centralising medium—away from a centralising role and towards becoming an integrating medium, a medium which knits together, on an equal basis, a lot of decentralised activities.

I suggest, indeed, that decentralised activity in a large country like this, without a mechanism for integration or this knitting together is not a viable proposition. It is not a viable proposition, because it will lead to parochialism, it will lead to dissensions, it will lead to becoming petty, to being engrossed in things which are not supportive of each other. So, to support decentralisation which has inherent value, you need, you should have, an integrating system. And so if we can work towards decentralisation plus integration, and not just centralisation, we have the ideal system. Is it possible?

Firstly, why I believe that decentralisation has value (and mind you,

I have already said decentralisation in isolation without integration will not be viable, will not be productive) is because you deal with the integrity of things, you touch each other, you touch each other through your total personality, things which matter, the smells and the sounds—whatever you mean when you say that interpersonal communication and interaction is much more important than anything else. It is essentially the element of communication philosophy which enters into decentralised communication. There are felt problems to be dealt with. There are nuances to be communicated, nuances drenched in local custom, local shared experience, and irrelevant nothings which say a great deal.

Also, education cannot be conducted only centrally; it is a process of give and take. If you are discussing intimate problems which are locale-specific, for example, if it is going to rain only around Delhi, and rain very hard, then you need to spend a lot of time telling the farmers around Delhi that if the crops are ripe, please leave them standing till the rain passes over because they would not be damaged as much as they would be if you cut them and let them lie in the field. You may have to say it many times a day in different ways. But this is not of importance to Tamil Nadu which is drying up.

There are many things of this sort which certainly have to be dealt in a decentralised way and you have to give lots of time to them, not to give out as just casual news items. You have to work with people. Then you may go out with cameras, you may have to talk to the people, bring back the material and retransmit it. So you have to stay with the important issues so that people and problems get closely involved. But then you must also open your windows to the rest of the country. Everybody should be able to open their windows to everybody else, so that the learning, the understanding and the beauty of decentralised experience is shared across the country and we become whole, a totality, in this marvellous, beautiful country of ours which has so much diversity

and so much richness. And, all this is possible now.

I was suggesting that the tyranny of technology has gone. You have seen these little cameras operating here. We call them — because a long time ago some one outside gave them this name — news-gathering cameras. I suggest that the technical quality of most of these simple cameras and simple systems that go with them is quite acceptable if what they record is of interest. They are not only news-gathering cameras, they are also programme-making cameras. They are cameras which you can carry freely wherever you go and they allow you to record programmes wherever you go. We have seen lots of programmes made with similar cameras during Asiad and NAM and we found them to be quite acceptable.

There may be some loss of technical quality as compared to the very expensive studio cameras but this is more than compensated by the fact that you see reality in the raw, you interact with people, you get their reactions and that is compensation enough. Further, you get away from the need for very massive systems, large studios, enormous places. You would of course need places, rooms, for editing but the concept of a studio has to undergo a revolution.

You could work out a system where such cameras can be distributed in their hundreds, people could be trained very fast and much of the programme collection and generation could be deprofessionalised. And there is another aspect. Once you begin to work with these things and in this mode (something which was impossible some years ago) you can go out to where things are happening, you can bring back reports, not confined to dead, written words — most of us are not very capable in that regard anyway — but in terms of vibrant, live images, to decision makers, and others, about what is actually happening. Every time there is a flood or drought, or a successful innovation, or a problem of implementation, big people do not have to go out on 'flying visits to see for themselves.' You can bring the picture and the agony of the flood to

their rooms. You may also collect a lot of rich materials this way, which may not be broadcastable, because it is too detailed, or too sensitive or too 'intellectual' for general broadcast; the material might be in the nature of a detailed statement or investigation, which could then be shown and discussed in seminars like this. On the other hand much of the material could be used for broadcasts also.

While doing all this you begin to generate a class of people who will be audio-visual activists and not only programme makers; indeed they will combine both the functions. The quality and relevance of programmes will automatically go up because of increased interaction and involvement. Such close working is the essence of education and a good approximation to reciprocal interaction. And if you couple this activity around local things with the distant connection, the long reach, provided by the satellite, you begin to develop a situation where your communication system becomes an integral part of your cultural, educational and developmental activities. You can analyse and support the content of the 20 point programme. You can deal with the colour and complexion of social issues. You can convey across the country the excitement and exhilarations of small groups beginning to make discoveries, mend fences and achieve results. You can deal with problems of training, skill formation or continuing education. And, most importantly, you can provide a powerful instrument to a large number of development agents working in the field.

In short, if you follow this approach, you have now the means, at least the technical means, for a wide involvement of the people of this country in an interactive, analytic and constructive adventure into the future...and then the future looks tremendous. I do hope that, slowly, we will also evolve the needed organisational framework and start on this journey.

(Extracted from an address delivered at the seminar on Communication Policy held in Delhi on the 28th and 29th of April, 1983.)

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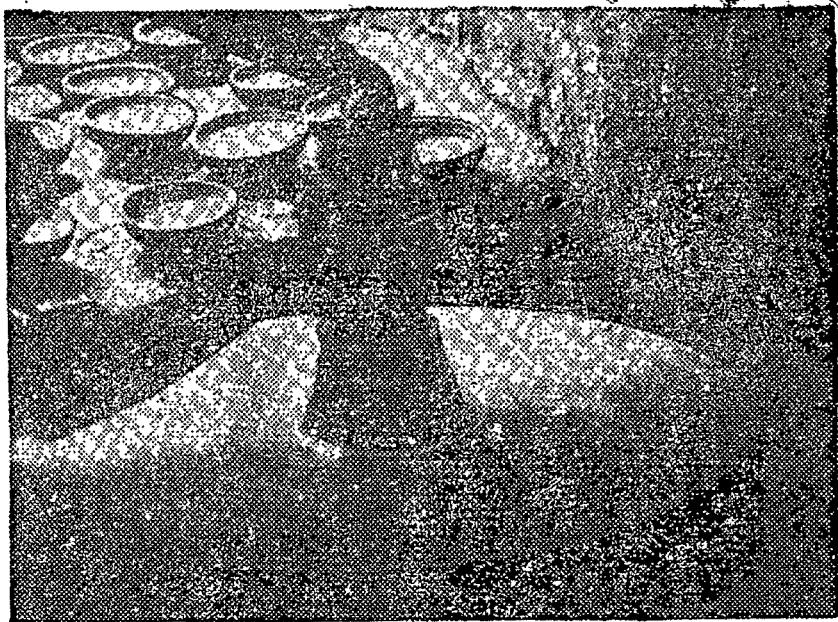
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